

AFRICAN FOLKTALES IN THE FAIRY BOOKS OF ANDREW LANG

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THE PINK FAIRY BOOK

EDITED BY

ANDREW LANG



WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. J. FORD

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*THE JACKAL, THE DOVE, AND
THE PANTHER¹*

THERE was once a dove who built a nice soft nest as a home for her three little ones. She was very proud of their beauty, and perhaps talked about them to her neighbours more than she need have done, till at last everybody for miles round knew where the three prettiest baby doves in the whole country side were to be found.

One day a jackal who was prowling about in search of a dinner came by chance to the foot of the rock where the dove's nest was hidden away, and he suddenly bethought himself that if he could get nothing better he might manage to make a mouthful of one of the young doves. So he shouted as loud as he could, 'Ohé, ohé, mother dove.'

And the dove replied, trembling with fear, 'What do you want, sir?'

'One of your children,' said he; 'and if you don't throw it to me I will eat up you and the others as well.'

Now, the dove was nearly driven distracted at the jackal's words; but, in order to save the lives of the other two, she did at last throw the little one out of the nest. The jackal ate it up, and went home to sleep.

Meanwhile the mother dove sat on the edge of her nest, crying bitterly, when a heron, who was flying slowly

¹ *Contes populaires des Bassoutos.* Recueillis et traduits par E. Jacottet. Paris: Leroux, Editeur.

past the rock, was filled with pity for her, and stopped to ask, 'What is the matter, you poor dove?'

And the dove answered, 'A jackal came by, and asked me to give him one of my little ones, and said that if I refused he would jump on my nest and eat us all up.'

But the heron replied, 'You should not have believed him. He could never have jumped so high. He only deceived you because he wanted something for supper.' And with these words the heron flew off.

He had hardly got out of sight when again the jackal came creeping slowly round the foot of the rock. And when he saw the dove he cried out a second time, 'Ohé, ohé, mother dove! give me one of your little ones, or I will jump on your nest and eat you all up.'

This time the dove knew better, and she answered boldly, 'Indeed, I shall do nothing of the sort,' though her heart beat wildly with fear when she saw the jackal preparing for a spring.

However, he only cut himself against the rock, and thought he had better stick to threats, so he started again with his old cry, 'Mother dove, mother dove! be quick and give me one of your little ones, or I will eat you all up.'

But the mother dove only answered as before, 'Indeed, I shall do nothing of the sort, for I know we are safely out of your reach.'

The jackal felt it was quite hopeless to get what he wanted, and asked, 'Tell me, mother dove, how have you suddenly become so wise?'

'It was the heron who told me,' replied she.

'And which way did he go?' said the jackal.

'Down there among the reeds. You can see him if you look,' said the dove.

Then the jackal nodded good-bye, and went quickly after the heron. He soon came up to the great bird, who was standing on a stone on the edge of the river watching for a nice fat fish. 'Tell me, heron,' said he, 'when the

wind blows from that quarter, to which side do you turn?’

‘And which side do *you* turn to?’ asked the heron.

The jackal answered, ‘I always turn to *this* side.’

‘Then that is the side *I* turn to,’ remarked the heron.

‘And when the rain comes from that quarter, which side do you turn to?’

And the heron replied, ‘And which side do *you* turn to?’

‘Oh, *I* always turn to this side,’ said the jackal.

‘Then that is the side *I* turn to,’ said the heron.

‘And when the rain comes straight down, what do you do?’

‘What do you do yourself?’ asked the heron.

‘I do this,’ answered the jackal. ‘I cover my head with my paws.’

‘Then that is what *I* do,’ said the heron. ‘I cover my head with my wings,’ and as he spoke he lifted his large wings and spread them completely over his head.

With one bound the jackal had seized him by the neck, and began to shake him.

‘Oh, have pity, have pity!’ cried the heron. ‘I never did you any harm.’

‘You told the dove how to get the better of me, and I am going to eat you for it.’

‘But if you will let me go,’ entreated the heron, ‘I will show you the place where the panther has her lair.’

‘Then you had better be quick about it,’ said the jackal, holding tight on to the heron until he had pointed out the panther’s den. ‘Now you may go, my friend, for there is plenty of food here for me.’

So the jackal came up to the panther, and asked politely, ‘Panther, would you like me to look after your children while you are out hunting?’

‘I should be very much obliged,’ said the panther; ‘but be sure you take care of them. They always cry all the time that I am away.’

So saying she trotted off, and the jackal marched into the cave, where he found ten little panthers, and instantly ate one up. By-and-bye the panther returned from hunting, and said to him, 'Jackal, bring out my little ones for their supper.'

The jackal fetched them out one by one till he had brought out nine, and he took the last one and brought it out again, so the whole ten seemed to be there, and the panther was quite satisfied.

Next day she went again to the chase, and the jackal ate up another little panther, so now there were only eight. In the evening, when she came back, the panther said, 'Jackal, bring out my little ones!'

And the jackal brought out first one and then another, and the last one he brought out three times, so that the whole ten seemed to be there.

The following day the same thing happened, and the next and the next and the next, till at length there was not even one left, and the rest of the day the jackal busied himself with digging a large hole at the back of the den.

That night, when the panther returned from hunting, she said to him as usual, 'Jackal, bring out my little ones.'

But the jackal replied: 'Bring out your little ones, indeed! Why, you know as well as I do that you have eaten them all up.'

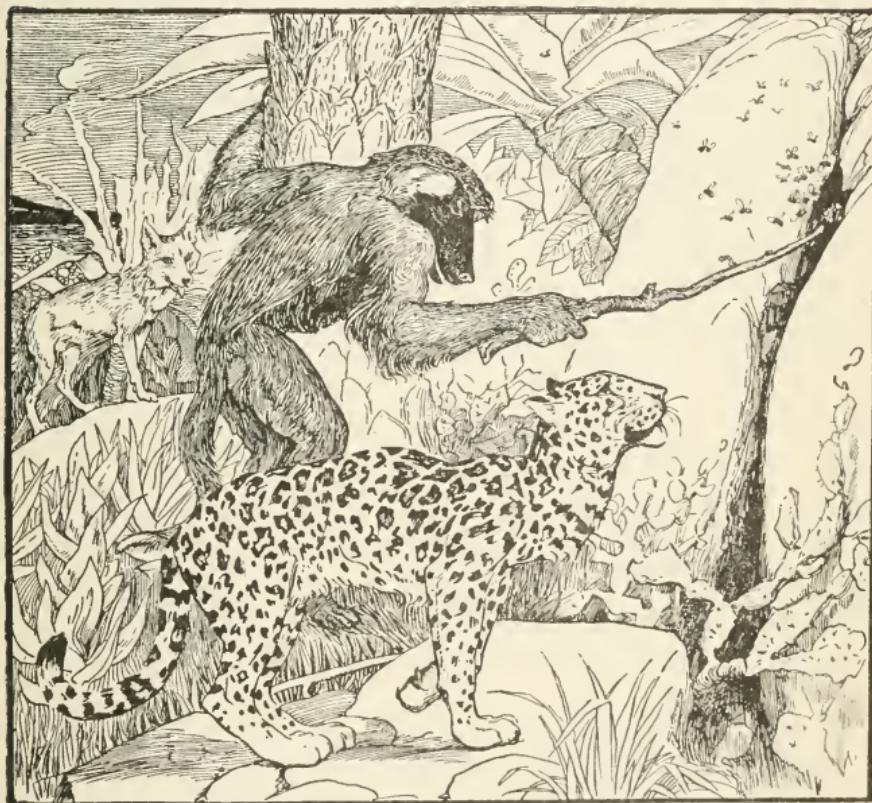
Of course the panther had not the least idea what the jackal meant by this, and only repeated, 'Jackal, bring out my children.' As she got no answer she entered the cave, but found no jackal, for he had crawled through the hole he had made and escaped. And, what was worse, she did not find the little ones either.

Now the panther was not going to let the jackal get off like that, and set off at a trot to catch him. The jackal, however, had got a good start, and he reached a place where a swarm of bees deposited their honey in the cleft of a rock. Then he stood still and waited till the

panther came up to him: 'Jackal, where are my little ones?' she asked.

And the jackal answered: 'They are up there. It is where I keep school.'

The panther looked about, and then inquired, 'But where? I see nothing of them.'



• THE BABOON WISHES TO SEE THE PANTHER'S CHILDREN. •

'Come a little this way,' said the jackal, 'and you will hear how beautifully they sing.'

So the panther drew near the cleft of the rock.

'Don't you hear them?' said the jaekal; 'they are in there,' and slipped away while the panther was listening to the song of the children.

She was still standing in the same place when a baboon went by. ‘What are you doing there, panther?’

‘I am listening to my children singing. It is here that the jackal keeps his school.’

Then the baboon seized a stick, and poked it in the cleft of a rock, exclaiming, ‘Well, then, I should like to see your children!’

The bees flew out in a huge swarm, and made furiously for the panther, whom they attacked on all sides, while the baboon soon climbed up out of the way, crying, as he perched himself on the branch of a tree, ‘I wish you joy of your children!’ while from afar the jackal’s voice was heard exclaiming: ‘Sting her well! don’t let her go!’

The panther galloped away as if she was mad, and flung herself into the nearest lake, but every time she raised her head, the bees stung her afresh, so at last the poor beast was drowned altogether.

THE LITTLE HARE¹

A LONG, long way off, in a land where water is very scarce, there lived a man and his wife and several children. One day the wife said to her husband, 'I am pining to have the liver of a *nyamatsané* for my dinner. If you love me as much as you say you do, you will go out and hunt for a *nyamatsané*, and will kill it and get its liver. If not, I shall know that your love is not worth having.'

'Bake some bread,' was all her husband answered, 'then take the crust and put it in this little bag.'

The wife did as she was told, and when she had finished she said to her husband, 'The bag is all ready and quite full.'

'Very well,' said he, 'and now good-bye; I am going after the *nyamatsané*.'

But the *nyamatsané* was not so easy to find as the woman had hoped. The husband walked on and on and on without ever seeing one, and every now and then he felt so hungry that he was obliged to eat one of the crusts of bread out of his bag. At last, when he was ready to drop from fatigue, he found himself on the edge of a great marsh, which bordered on one side the country of the *nyamatsanés*. But there were no more *nyamatsanés* here than anywhere else. They had all gone on a hunt-

¹ *Contes populaires des Bassoutos.* Recueillis et traduits par E. Jacottet. Paris: Leroux, Editeur.

ing expedition, as their larder was empty, and the only person left at home was their grandmother, who was so feeble she never went out of the house. Our friend looked on this as a great piece of luck, and made haste to kill her before the others returned, and to take out her liver, after which he dressed himself in her skin as well as he could. He had scarcely done this when he heard the noise of the *nyamatsanés* coming back to their grandmother, for they were very fond of her, and never stayed away from her longer than they could help. They rushed clattering into the hut, exclaiming, 'We smell human flesh! Some man is here,' and began to look about for him; but they only saw their old grandmother, who answered, in a trembling voice, 'No, my children, no! What should any man be doing here?' The *nyamatsanés* paid no attention to her, and began to open all the cupboards, and peep under all the beds, crying out all the while, 'A man is here! a man is here!' but they could find nobody, and at length, tired out with their long day's hunting, they curled themselves up and fell asleep.

Next morning they woke up quite refreshed, and made ready to start on another expedition; but as they did not feel happy about their grandmother they said to her, 'Grandmother, won't you come to-day and feed with us?' And they led their grandmother outside, and all of them began hungrily to eat pebbles. Our friend pretended to do the same, but in reality he slipped the stones into his pouch, and swallowed the crusts of bread instead. However, as the *nyamatsanés* did not see this they had no idea that he was 'not really their grandmother. When they had eaten a great many pebbles they thought they had done enough for that day, and all went home together and curled themselves up to sleep. Next morning when they awoke they said, 'Let us go and amuse ourselves by jumping over the ditch,' and every time they cleared it with a bound. Then they begged their grandmother to jump over it too, and with a tremen-

dous effort she managed to spring right over to the other side. After this they had no doubt at all of its being their true grandmother, and went off to their hunting, leaving our friend at home in the hut.

As soon as they had gone out of sight our hero made haste to take the liver from the place where he had hid it, threw off the skin of the old *nyamatsané*, and ran away as hard as he could, only stopping to pick up a very brilliant and polished little stone, which he put in his bag by the side of the liver.

Towards evening the *nyamatsanés* came back to the hut full of anxiety to know how their grandmother had got on during their absence. The first thing they saw on entering the door was her skin lying on the floor, and then they knew that they had been deceived, and they said to each other, 'So we were right, after all, and it was human flesh we smelt.' Then they stooped down to find traces of the man's footsteps, and when they had got them instantly set out in hot pursuit.

Meanwhile our friend had journeyed many miles, and was beginning to feel quite safe and comfortable, when, happening to look round, he saw in the distance a thick cloud of dust moving rapidly. His heart stood still within him, and he said to himself, 'I am lost. It is the *nyamatsanés*, and they will tear me in pieces,' and indeed the cloud of dust was drawing near with amazing quickness, and the *nyamatsanés* almost felt as if they were already devouring him. Then as a last hope the man took the little stone that he had picked up out of his bag and flung it on the ground. The moment it touched the soil it became a huge rock, whose steep sides were smooth as glass, and on the top of it our hero hastily seated himself. It was in vain that the *nyamatsanés* tried to climb up and reach him; they slid down again much faster than they had gone up; and by sunset they were quite worn out, and fell asleep at the foot of the rock.

No sooner had the *nyamatsanés* tumbled off to sleep than the man stole softly down and fled away as fast as his legs would carry him, and by the time his enemies were awake he was a very long way off. They sprang quickly to their feet and began to sniff the soil round the rock, in order to discover traces of his footsteps, and they galloped after him with terrific speed. The chase continued for several days and nights; several times the *nyamatsanés* almost reached him, and each time he was saved by his little pebble.

Between his fright and his hurry he was almost dead of exhaustion when he reached his own village, where the *nyamatsanés* could not follow him, because of their enemies the dogs, which swarmed over all the roads. So they returned home.

Then our friend staggered into his own hut and called to his wife: 'Ichou! how tired I am! Quick, give me something to drink. Then go and get fuel and light a fire.'

So she did what she was bid, and then her husband took the *nyamatsané*'s liver from his pouch and said to her, 'There, I have brought you what you wanted, and now you know that I love you truly.'

And the wife answered, 'It is well. Now go and take out the children, so that I may remain alone in the hut,' and as she spoke she lifted down an old stone pot and put on the liver to cook. Her husband watched her for a moment, and then said, 'Be sure you eat it all yourself. Do not give a scrap to any of the children, but eat every morsel up.' So the woman took the liver and ate it all herself.

Directly the last mouthful had disappeared she was seized with such violent thirst that she caught up a great pot full of water and drank it at a single draught. Then, having no more in the house, she ran in next door and said, 'Neighbour, give me, I pray you, something to drink.' The neighbour gave her a large vessel quite full,

and the woman drank it off at a single draught, and held it out for more.

But the neighbour pushed her away, saying, 'No, I shall have none left for my children.'

So the woman went into another house, and drank all the water she could find; but the more she drank the more thirsty she became. She wandered in this manner through the whole village till she had drunk every water-pot dry. Then she rushed off to the nearest



THE NYAMATSANÉS RETURN HOME

spring, and swallowed that, and when she had finished all the springs and wells about she drank up first the river and then a lake. But by this time she had drunk so much that she could not rise from the ground.

In the evening, when it was time for the animals to have their drink before going to bed, they found the lake quite dry, and they had to make up their minds to be thirsty till the water flowed again and the streams were full. Even then, for some time, the lake was very dirty,

and the lion, as king of the beasts, commanded that no one should drink till it was quite clear again.

But the little hare, who was fond of having his own way, and was very thirsty besides, stole quietly off when all the rest were asleep in their dens, and crept down to the margin of the lake and drank his fill. Then he smeared the dirty water all over the rabbit's face and paws, so that it might look as if it were he who had been disobeying Big Lion's orders.

The next day, as soon as it was light, Big Lion marched straight for the lake, and all the other beasts followed him. He saw at once that the water had been troubled again, and was very angry.

'Who has been drinking my water?' said he; and the little hare gave a jump, and, pointing to the rabbit, he answered, 'Look there! it must be he! Why, there is mud all over his face and paws!'

The rabbit, frightened out of his wits, tried to deny the fact, exclaiming, 'Oh, no, indeed I never did;' but Big Lion would not listen, and commanded them to cane him with a birch rod.

Now the little hare was very much pleased with his cleverness in causing the rabbit to be beaten instead of himself, and went about boasting of it. At last one of the other animals overheard him, and called out, 'Little hare, little hare! what is that you are saying?'

But the little hare hastily replied, 'I only asked you to pass me my stick.'

An hour or two later, thinking that no one was near him, he said to himself again, 'It was really I who drank up the water, but I made them think it was the rabbit.'

But one of the beasts whose ears were longer than the rest caught the words, and went to tell Big Lion about it. 'Do you hear what the little hare is saying?'

So Big Lion sent for the little hare, and asked him what he meant by talking like that.

The little hare saw that there was no use trying to hide it, so he answered pertly, ‘It was I who drank the water, but I made them think it was the rabbit.’ Then he turned and ran as fast as he could, with all the other beasts pursuing him.

They were almost up to him when he dashed into a very narrow cleft in the rock, much too small for them to follow; but in his hurry he had left one of his long ears sticking out, which they just managed to seize. But pull as hard as they might they could not drag him out of the hole, and at last they gave it up and left him, with his ear very much torn and scratched.

When the last tail was out of sight the little hare crept cautiously out, and the first person he met was the rabbit. He had plenty of impudence, so he put a bold face on the matter, and said, ‘Well, my good rabbit, you see I have had a beating as well as you.’

But the rabbit was still sore and sulky, and he did not care to talk, so he answered, coldly, ‘You have treated me very badly. It was really you who drank that water, and you accused me of having done it.’

‘Oh, my good rabbit, never mind that! I’ve got such a wonderful secret to tell you! Do you know what to do so as to escape death?’

‘No, I don’t.’

‘Well, we must begin by digging a hole.’

So they dug a hole, and then the little hare said, ‘The next thing is to make a fire in the hole,’ and they set to work to collect wood, and lit quite a large fire.

When it was burning brightly the little hare said to the rabbit, ‘Rabbit, my friend, throw me into the fire, and when you hear my fur crackling, and I call “Itchi, Itchi,” then be quick and pull me out.’

The rabbit did as he was told, and threw the little hare into the fire; but no sooner did the little hare begin to feel the heat of the flames than he took some green bay leaves he had plucked for the purpose and held them in

the middle of the fire, where they crackled and made a great noise. Then he called loudly 'Itchi, Itchi! Rabbit, my friend, be quick, be quick! Don't you hear how my skin is crackling?'

And the rabbit came in a great hurry and pulled him out.

Then the little hare said, 'Now it is your turn!' and he threw the rabbit in the fire. The moment the rabbit felt the flames he cried out 'Itchi, Itchi, I am burning; pull me out quick, my friend!'

But the little hare only laughed, and said, 'No, you may stay there! It is your own fault. Why were you such a fool as to let yourself be thrown in? Did n't you know that fire burns?' And in a very few minutes nothing was left of the rabbit but a few bones.

When the fire was quite out the little hare went and picked up one of these bones, and made a flute out of it, and sang this song:

Pii, pii, O flute that I love,
Pii, pii, rabbits are but little boys.
Pii, pii, he would have burned me if he could;
Pii, pii, but I burned him, and he crackled finely.

When he got tired of going through the world singing this the little hare went back to his friends and entered the service of Big Lion. One day he said to his master, 'Grandfather, shall I show you a splendid way to kill game?'

'What is it?' asked Big Lion.

'We must dig a ditch, and then you must lie in it and pretend to be dead.'

Big Lion did as he was told, and when he had lain down the little hare got up on a wall blew a trumpet and shouted —

Pii, pii, all you animals come and see,
Big Lion is dead, and now peace will be.

Directly they heard this they all came running. The little hare received them and said, 'Pass on, this way

to the lion.' So they all entered into the Animal Kingdom. Last of all came the monkey with her baby on her back. She approached the ditch, and took a blade of grass and tickled Big Lion's nose, and his nostrils moved in spite of his efforts to keep them still. Then the monkey cried, 'Come, my baby, climb on my back and let us go. What sort of a dead body is it that can still feel when it is tickled?' And she and her baby went away in a fright. Then the little hare said to the other



beasts, 'Now, shut the gate of the Animal Kingdom.' And it was shut, and great stones were rolled against it. When everything was tight closed the little hare turned to Big Lion and said 'Now!' and Big Lion bounded out of the ditch and tore the other animals in pieces.

But Big Lion kept all the choice bits for himself, and only gave away the little scraps that he did not care about eating; and the little hare grew very angry, and determined to have his revenge. He had long ago found out

that Big Lion was very easily taken in; so he laid his plans accordingly. He said to him, as if the idea had just come into his head, 'Grandfather, let us build a hut,' and Big Lion consented. And when they had driven the stakes into the ground, and had made the walls of the hut, the little hare told Big Lion to climb upon the top while he stayed inside. When he was ready he called out, 'Now, grandfather, begin,' and Big Lion passed his rod through the reeds with which the roofs are always covered in that country. The little hare took it and cried, 'Now it is my turn to pierce them,' and as he spoke he passed the rod back through the reeds and gave Big Lion's tail a sharp poke.

'What is pricking me so?' asked Big Lion.

'Oh, just a little branch sticking out. I am going to break it,' answered the little hare; but of course he had done it on purpose, as he wanted to fix Big Lion's tail so firmly to the hut that he would not be able to move. In a little while he gave another prick, and Big Lion called again, 'What is pricking me so?'

This time the little hare said to himself, 'He will find out what I am at. I must try some other plan.' So he called out, 'Grandfather, you had better put your tongue here, so that the branches shall not touch you.' Big Lion did as he was bid, and the little hare tied it tightly to the stakes of the wall. Then he went outside and shouted, 'Grandfather, you can come down now,' and Big Lion tried, but he could not move an inch.

Then the little hare began quietly to eat Big Lion's dinner right before his eyes, and paying no attention at all to his growls of rage. When he had quite done he climbed up on the hut, and, blowing his flute, he chanted 'Pii, pii, fall rain and hail,' and directly the sky was full of clouds, the thunder roared, and huge hailstones whitened the roof of the hut. The little hare, who had taken refuge within, called out again, 'Big Lion, be quick and come down and dine with me.' But there was

no answer, not even a growl, for the hailstones had killed Big Lion.

The little hare enjoyed himself vastly for some time, living comfortably in the hut, with plenty of food to eat and no trouble at all in getting it. But one day a great wind arose, and flung down the Big Lion's half-dried skin from the roof of the hut. The little hare bounded with terror at the noise, for he thought Big Lion must have come to life again; but on discovering what had happened he set about cleaning the skin, and propped the mouth open with sticks so that he could get through. So, dressed in Big Lion's skin, the little hare started on his travels.

The first visit he paid was to the hyænas, who trembled at the sight of him, and whispered to each other, 'How shall we escape from this terrible beast?' Meanwhile the little hare did not trouble himself about them, but just asked where the king of the hyænas lived, and made himself quite at home there. Every morning each hyæna thought to himself, 'To-day he is certain to eat me;' but several days went by, and they were all still alive. At length, one evening, the little hare, looking round for something to amuse him, noticed a great pot full of boiling water, so he strolled up to one of the hyænas and said, 'Go and get in.' The hyæna dared not disobey, and in a few minutes was scalded to death. Then the little hare went the round of the village, saying to every hyaena he met, 'Go and get into the boiling water,' so that in a little while there was hardly a male left in the village.

One day all the hyænas that remained alive went out very early into the fields, leaving only one little daughter at home. The little hare, thinking he was all alone, came into the enclosure, and, wishing to feel what it was like to be a hare again, threw off Big Lion's skin, and began to jump and dance, singing —

I am just the little hare, the little hare, the little hare;
I am just the little hare who killed the great hyænas.

The little hyæna gazed at him in surprise, saying to herself, ‘What! was it really this tiny beast who put to death all our best people?’ when suddenly a gust of wind rustled the reeds that surrounded the enclosure, and the little hare, in a fright, hastily sprang back into Big Lion’s skin.

When the hyænas returned to their homes the little hyæna said to her father: ‘Father, our tribe has very nearly been swept away, and all this has been the work of a tiny creature dressed in the lion’s skin.’

But her father answered, ‘Oh, my dear child, you don’t know what you are talking about.’

She replied, ‘Yes, father, it is quite true. I saw it with my own eyes.’

The father did not know what to think, and told one of his friends, who said, ‘To-morrow we had better keep watch ourselves.’

And the next day they hid themselves and waited till the little hare came out of the royal hut. He walked gaily towards the enclosure, threw off Big Lion’s skin, and sang and danced as before —

I am just the little hare, the little hare, the little hare,
I am just the little hare, who killed the great hyænas.

That night the two hyænas told all the rest, saying, ‘Do you know that we have allowed ourselves to be trampled on by a wretched creature with nothing of the lion about him but his skin?’

When supper was being cooked that evening, before they all went to bed, the little hare, looking fierce and terrible in Big Lion’s skin, said as usual to one of the hyænas, ‘Go and get into the boiling water.’ But the hyæna never stirred. There was silence for a moment; then a hyæna took a stone, and flung it with all his force against the lion’s skin. The little hare jumped out through the mouth with a single spring, and fled away like lightning, all the hyænas in full pursuit uttering great

cries. As he turned a corner the little hare cut off both his ears, so that they should not know him, and pretended to be working at a grindstone which lay there.

The hyenas soon came up to him and said, 'Tell me, friend, have you seen the little hare go by?'

'No, I have seen no one.'

'Where can he be?' said the hyenas one to another. 'Of course, this creature is quite different, and not at all like the little hare.' Then they went on their way, but, finding no traces of the little hare, they returned sadly to their village, saying, 'To think we should have allowed ourselves to be swept away by a wretched creature like that!'



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ANDREW LANG



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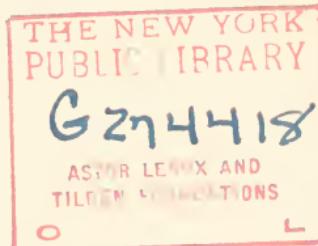
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*THE STORY OF
DSCHEMIL AND DSHEMILA*

THERE was once a man whose name was Dschemil, and he had a cousin who was called Dschemila. They had been betrothed by their parents when they were children, and now Dschemil thought that the time had come for them to be married, and he went two or three days' journey, to the nearest big town, to buy furniture for the new house.

While he was away, Dschemila and her friends set off to the neighbouring woods to pick up sticks, and as she gathered them she found an iron mortar lying on the ground. She placed it on her bundle of sticks, but the mortar would not stay still, and whenever she raised the bundle to put it on her shoulders it slipped off sideways. At length she saw the only way to carry the mortar was to tie it in the very middle of her bundle, and had just unfastened her sticks, when she heard her companions' voices.

‘Dschemila, what are you doing? it is almost dark, and if you mean to come with us you must be quick! ’

But Dschemila only replied, ‘You had better go back without me, for I am not going to leave my mortar behind, if I stay here till midnight.’

‘Do as you like,’ said the girls, and started on their walk home.

The night soon fell, and at the last ray of light the mortar suddenly became an ogre, who threw Dschemila on his back, and carried her off into a desert place, distant a

whole month's journey from her native town. Here he shut her into a castle, and told her not to fear, as her life was safe. Then he went back to his wife, leaving Dschemila weeping over the fate that she had brought upon herself.

Meanwhile the other girls had reached home, and Dschemila's mother came out to look for her daughter.

'What have you done with her?' she asked anxiously.

'We had to leave her in the wood,' they replied, 'for she had picked up an iron mortar, and could not manage to carry it.'

So the old woman set off at once for the forest, calling to her daughter as she hurried along.

'Do go home,' cried the townspeople, as they heard her; 'we will go and look for your daughter; you are only a woman, and it is a task that needs strong men.'

But she answered, 'Yes, go; but I will go with you! Perhaps it will be only her corpse that we shall find after all. She has most likely been stung by asps, or eaten by wild beasts.'

The men, seeing her heart was bent on it, said no more, but told one of the girls she must come with them, and show them the place where they had left Dschemila. They found the bundle of wood lying where she had dropped it, but the maiden was nowhere to be seen.

'Dschemila! Dschemila!' cried they; but nobody answered.

'If we make a fire, perhaps she will see it,' said one of the men. And they lit a fire, and then went, one this way, and one that, through the forest, to look for her, whispering to each other that if she had been killed by a lion they would be sure to find some trace of it; or if she had fallen asleep, the sound of their voices would wake her; or if a snake had bitten her, they would at least come on her corpse.

All night they searched, and when morning broke and

they knew no more than before what had become of the maiden, they grew weary, and said to the mother :

‘ It is no use. Let us go home, nothing has happened to your daughter, except that she has run away with a man.’

‘ Yes, I will come,’ answered she, ‘ but I must first look in the river. Perhaps some one has thrown her in there.’ But the maiden was not in the river.

For four days the father and mother waited and watched for their child to come back ; then they gave up hope, and said to each other : ‘ What is to be done ? What are we to say to the man to whom Dschemila is betrothed ? Let us kill a goat, and bury its head in the grave, and when the man returns we must tell him Dschemila is dead.’

Very soon the bridegroom came back, bringing with him carpets and soft cushions for the house of his bride. And as he entered the town Dschemila’s father met him, saying, ‘ Greeting to you. She is dead.’

At these words the young man broke into loud cries, and it was some time before he could speak. Then he turned to one of the crowd who had gathered round him, and asked : ‘ Where have they buried her ? ’

‘ Come to the churchyard with me,’ answered he ; and the young man went with him, carrying with him some of the beautiful things he had brought. These he laid on the grass and then began to weep afresh. All day he stayed, and at nightfall he gathered up his stuffs and carried them to his own house. But when the day dawned he took them in his arms and returned to the grave, where he remained as long as it was light, playing softly on his flute. And this he did daily for six months.

One morning, a man who was wandering through the desert, having lost his way, came upon a lonely castle. The sun was very hot, and the man was very tired, so he said to himself, ‘ I will rest a little in the shadow of this

castle.' He stretched himself out comfortably, and was almost asleep, when he heard a voice calling to him softly:

'Are you a ghost,' it said, 'or a man?'

He looked up, and saw a girl leaning out of a window, and he answered:

'I am a man, and a better one, too, than your father or your grandfather.'

'May all good luck be with you,' said she; 'but what has brought you into this land of ogres and horrors?'

'Does an ogre really live in this castle?' asked he.

'Certainly he does,' replied the girl, 'and as night is not far off he will be here soon. So, dear friend, depart quickly, lest he return and snap you up for supper.'

'But I am so thirsty!' said the man. 'Be kind, and give me some drink, or else I shall die! Surely, even in this desert there must be some spring?'

'Well, I have noticed that whenever the ogre brings back water he always comes from that side; so if you follow the same direction perhaps you may find some.'

The man jumped up at once and was about to start, when the maiden spoke again:

'Tell me, where you are going?'

'Why do you want to know?'

'I have an errand for you; but tell me first whether you go east or west.'

'I travel to Damascus.'

'Then do this for me. As you pass through our village, ask for a man called Dschemil, and say to him: "Dschemila greets you, from the castle, which lies far away, and is rocked by the wind. In my grave lies only a goat. So take heart."

And the man promised, and went his way, till he came to a spring of water. And he drank a great draught and then lay on the bank and slept quietly. When he woke he said to himself, 'The maiden did a good deed when she told me where to find water. A few hours

more, and I should have been dead. So I will do her bidding, and seek out her native town and the man for whom the message was given.'

For a whole month he travelled, till at last he reached the town where Dschemil dwelt, and as luck would have it, there was the young man sitting before his door with his beard unshaven and his shaggy hair hanging over his eyes.

'Welcome, stranger,' said Dschemil, as the man stopped. 'Where have you come from?'

'I come from the west, and go towards the east,' he answered.

'Well, stop with us awhile, and rest and eat!' said Dschemil. And the man entered; and food was set before him, and he sat down with the father of the maiden and her brothers, and Dschemil. Only Dschemil himself was absent, squatting on the threshold.

'Why do you not eat too?' asked the stranger. But one of the young men whispered hastily:

'Leave him alone. Take no notice! It is only at night that he ever eats.'

So the stranger went on silently with his food. Suddenly one of Dschemil's brothers called out and said: 'Dschemil, bring us some water!' And the stranger remembered his message and said:

'Is there a man here named "Dschemil"? I lost my way in the desert, and came to a castle, and a maiden looked out of the window and—'

'Be quiet,' they cried, fearing that Dschemil might hear. But Dschemil had heard, and came forward and said:

'What did you see? Tell me truly, or I will cut off your head this instant!'

'My lord,' replied the stranger, 'as I was wandering, hot and tired, through the desert, I saw near me a great castle, and I said aloud, "I will rest a little in its shadow." And a maiden looked out of a window and

said, "Are you a ghost or a man?" And I answered, "I am a man, and a better one, too, than your father or your grandfather." And I was thirsty and asked for water, but she had none to give me, and I felt like to die. Then she told me that the ogre, in whose castle she dwelt, brought in water always from the same side, and that if I too went that way most likely I should come to it. But before I started she begged me to go to her native town, and if I met a man called Dschemil I was to say to him, "Dschemila greets you, from the castle which lies far away, and is rocked by the wind. In my grave lies only a goat. So take heart."

Then Dschemil turned to his family and said:

'Is this true? and is Dschemila not dead at all, but simply stolen from her home?'

'No, no,' replied they, 'his story is a pack of lies. Dschemila is really dead. Everybody knows it.'

'That I shall see for myself,' said Dschemil, and, snatching up a spade, hastened off to the grave where the goat's head lay buried.

And they answered, 'Then hear what really happened. When you were away, she went with the other maidens to the forest to gather wood. And there she found an iron mortar, which she wished to bring home; but she could not carry it, neither would she leave it. So the maidens returned without her, and as night was come, we all set out to look for her, but found nothing. And we said, "The bridegroom will be here to-morrow, and when he learns that she is lost, he will set out to seek her, and we shall lose him too. Let us kill a goat, and bury it in her grave, and tell him she is dead." Now you know, so do as you will. Only, if you go to seek her, take with you this man with whom she has spoken that he may show you the way.'

'Yes; that is the best plan,' replied Dschemil; 'so give me food, and hand me my sword, and we will set out directly.'

But the stranger answered: 'I am not going to waste a whole month in leading you to the castle! If it were only a day or two's journey I would not mind; but a month — no!'

'Come with me then for three days,' said Dschemil, 'and put me in the right road, and I will reward you richly.'

'Very well,' replied the stranger, 'so let it be.'

For three days they travelled from sunrise to sunset, then the stranger said: 'Dschemil?'

'Yes,' replied he.

'Go straight on till you reach a spring, then go on a little farther, and soon you will see the castle standing before you.'

'So I will,' said Dschemil.

'Farewell, then,' said the stranger, and turned back the way he had come.

It was six and twenty days before Dschemil caught sight of a green spot rising out of the sandy desert, and knew that the spring was near at last. He hastened his steps, and soon was kneeling by its side, drinking thirstily of the bubbling water. Then he lay down on the cool grass, and began to think. 'If the man was right, the castle must be somewhere about. I had better sleep here to-night, and to-morrow I shall be able to see where it is.' So he slept long and peacefully. When he awoke the sun was high, and he jumped up and washed his face and hands in the spring, before going on his journey. He had not walked far, when the castle suddenly appeared before him, though a moment before not a trace of it could be seen. 'How am I to get in?' he thought. 'I dare not knock, lest the ogre should hear me. Perhaps it would be best for me to climb up the wall, and wait to see what will happen.' So he did, and after sitting on the top for about an hour, a window above him opened, and a voice said: 'Dschemil!' He looked up, and at the sight of Dschemila, whom he had so long believed to be dead, he began to weep.

‘Dear cousin,’ she whispered, ‘what has brought you here?’

‘My grief at losing you.’

‘Oh! go away at once. If the ogre comes back he will kill you.’

‘I swear by your head, queen of my heart, that I have not found you only to lose you again! If I must die, well, I must!’

‘Oh, what can I do for you?’

‘Anything you like!’

‘If I let you down a cord, can you make it fast under your arms, and climb up?’

‘Of course I can,’ said he.

So Dschemila lowered the cord, and Dschemil tied it round him, and climbed up to her window. Then they embraced each other tenderly, and burst into tears of joy.

‘But what shall I do when the ogre returns?’ asked she.

‘Trust to me,’ he said.

Now there was a chest in the room, where Dschemila kept her clothes. And she made Dschemil get into it, and lie at the bottom, and told him to keep very still.

He was only hidden just in time, for the lid was hardly closed when the ogre’s heavy tread was heard on the stairs. He flung open the door, bringing men’s flesh for himself and lamb’s flesh for the maiden. ‘I smell the smell of a man!’ he thundered. ‘What is he doing here?’

‘How could any one have come to this desert place?’ asked the girl, and burst into tears.

‘Do not cry,’ said the ogre; ‘perhaps a raven has dropped some scraps from his claws.’

‘Ah, yes, I was forgetting,’ answered she. ‘One did drop some bones about.’

‘Well, burn them to powder,’ replied the ogre, ‘so that I may swallow it.’

So the maiden took some bones and burned them, and gave them to the ogre, saying, 'Here is the powder, swallow it.'

And when he had swallowed the powder the ogre stretched himself out and went to sleep.

In a little while the man's flesh, which the maiden was cooking for the ogre's supper, called out and said :

‘Hist! Hist!
A man lies in the kist!’

And the lamb's flesh answered :

‘He is your brother,
And cousin of the other.’

The ogre moved sleepily, and asked, 'What did the meat say, Dschemila?'

‘Only that I must be sure to add salt.’

‘Well, add salt.’

‘Yes, I have done so,’ said she.

The ogre was soon sound asleep again, when the man's flesh called out a second time :

‘Hist! Hist!
A man lies in the kist!’

And the lamb's flesh answered :

‘He is your brother,
And cousin of the other.’

‘What did it say, Dschemila?’ asked the ogre.

‘Only that I must add pepper.’

‘Well, add pepper.’

‘Yes, I have done so,’ said she.

The ogre had had a long day's hunting, and could not keep himself awake. In a moment his eyes were tight shut, and then the man's flesh called out for the third time :

‘Hist! Hist!
A man lies in the kist.’

DSCHEMILA-OUTWITS-THE-OGRE



And the lamb's flesh answered:

‘He is your brother,
And cousin of the other.’

‘What did it say, Dschemila?’ asked the ogre.

‘Only that it was ready, and that I had better take it off the fire.’

‘Then if it is ready, bring it to me, and I will eat it.’

So she brought it to him, and while he was eating she supped of the lamb's flesh herself, and managed to put some aside for her cousin.

When the ogre had finished, and had washed his hands, he said to Dschemila: ‘Make my bed, for I am tired.’

So she made his bed, and put a nice soft pillow for his head, and tucked him up.

‘Father,’ she said suddenly.

‘Well, what is it?’

‘Dear father, if you are really asleep, why are your eyes always open?’

‘Why do you ask that, Dschemila? Do you want to deal treacherously with me?’

‘No, of course not, father. How could I, and what would be the use of it?’

‘Well, why do you want to know?’

‘Because last night I woke up and saw the whole place shining in a red light, which frightened me.’

‘That happens when I am fast asleep.’

‘And what is the good of the pin you always keep here so carefully?’

‘If I throw that pin in front of me, it turns into an iron mountain.’

‘And this darning needle?’

‘That becomes a sea.’

‘And this hatchet?’

‘That becomes a thorn hedge, which no one can pass

through. But why do you ask all these questions? I am sure you have something in your head.'

'Oh, I just wanted to know; and how could anyone find me out here?' and she began to cry.

'Oh, don't cry, I was only in fun,' said the ogre.

He was soon asleep again, and a yellow light shone through the castle.

'Come quick!' called Dschemil from the chest; 'we must fly now while the ogre is asleep.'

'Not yet,' she said, 'there is a yellow light shining. I don't think he is asleep.'

So they waited for an hour. Then Dschemil whispered again: 'Wake up! There is no time to lose!'

'Let me see if he is asleep,' said she, and she peeped in, and saw a red light shining. Then she stole back to her cousin, and asked, 'But how are we to get out?'

'Get the rope, and I will let you down.'

So she fetched the rope, the hatchet, and the pin and the needles, and said, 'Take them, and put them in the pocket of your cloak, and be sure not to lose them.'

Dschemil put them carefully in his pocket, and tied the rope round her, and let her down over the wall.

'Are you safe?' he asked.

'Yes, quite.'

'Then untie the rope, so that I may draw it up.'

And Dschemila did as she was told, and in a few minutes he stood beside her.

Now all this time the ogre was asleep, and had heard nothing. Then his dog came to him and said, 'O, sleeper, are you having pleasant dreams? Dschemila has forsaken you and run away.'

The ogre got out of bed, gave the dog a kick, then went back again, and slept till morning.

When it grew light, he rose, and called, 'Dschemila! Dschemila!' but he only heard the echo of his own voice! Then he dressed himself quickly; buckled on his sword

and whistled to his dog, and followed the road which he knew the fugitives must have taken.

‘Cousin,’ said Dschemila suddenly, and turning round as she spoke.



‘What is it?’ answered he.

‘The ogre is coming after us. I saw him.’

‘But where is he? I don’t see him.’

‘Over there. He only looks about as tall as a needle.’

Then they both began to run as fast as they could,

while the ogre and his dog kept drawing always nearer. A few more steps, and he would have been by their side, when Dschemila threw the darning needle behind her. In a moment it became an iron mountain between them and their enemy.

‘We will break it down, my dog and I,’ cried the ogre in a rage, and they dashed at the mountain till they had forced a path through, and came ever nearer and nearer.

‘Cousin!’ said Dschemila suddenly.

‘What is it?’

‘The ogre is coming after us with his dog.’

‘You go on in front then,’ answered he; and they both ran on as fast as they could, while the ogre and the dog drew always nearer and nearer.

‘They are close upon us!’ cried the maiden, glancing behind, ‘you must throw the pin.’

So Dschemil took the pin from his cloak and threw it behind him, and a dense thicket of thorns sprang up round them, which the ogre and his dog could not pass through.

‘I will get through it somehow, if I burrow underground,’ cried he, and very soon he and the dog were on the other side.

‘Cousin,’ said Dschemila, ‘they are close to us now.’

‘Go on in front, and fear nothing,’ replied Dschemil.

So she ran on a little way, and then stopped.

‘He is only a few yards away now,’ she said, and Dschemil flung the hatchet on the ground, and it turned into a lake.

‘I will drink, and my dog shall drink, till it is dry,’ shrieked the ogre, and the dog drank so much that it burst and died. But the ogre did not stop for that, and soon the whole lake was nearly dry. Then he exclaimed, ‘Dschemila, let your head become a donkey’s head, and your hair fur!’

But when it was done, Dschemil looked at her in

horror, and said, 'She is really a donkey, and not a woman at all!'

And he left her, and went home.

For two days poor Dschemila wandered about alone, weeping bitterly. When her cousin drew near his native town, he began to think over his conduct, and to feel ashamed of himself.

'Perhaps by this time she has changed back to her proper shape,' he said to himself, 'I will go and see!'

So he made all the haste he could, and at last he saw her seated on a rock, trying to keep off the wolves, who longed to have her for dinner. He drove them off and said, 'Get up, dear cousin, you have had a narrow escape.'

Dschemila stood up and answered, 'Bravo, my friend. You persuaded me to fly with you, and then left me helplessly to my fate.'

'Shall I tell you the truth?' asked he.

'Tell it.'

'I thought you were a witch, and I was afraid of you.'

'Did you not see me before my transformation? and did you not watch it happen under your very eyes, when the ogre bewitched me?'

'What shall I do?' said Dschemil. 'If I take you into the town, everyone will laugh, and say, "Is that a new kind of toy you have got? It has hands like a woman, feet like a woman, the body of a woman; but its head is the head of an ass, and its hair is fur."'

'Well, what do you mean to do with me?' asked Dschemila. 'Better take me home to my mother by night, and tell no one anything about it.'

'So I will,' said he.

They waited where they were till it was nearly dark, then Dschemil brought his cousin home.

'Is that Dschemil?' asked the mother when he knocked softly.

‘Yes, it is.’

‘And have you found her?’

‘Yes, and I have brought her to you.’

‘Oh, where is she? let me see her!’ cried the mother.

‘Here, behind me,’ answered Dschemil.

But when the poor woman caught sight of her daughter, she shrieked, and exclaimed, ‘Are you making fun of me? When did I ever give birth to an ass?’

‘Hush!’ said Dschemil, ‘it is not necessary to let the whole world know! And if you look at her body, you will see two scars on it.’

‘Mother,’ sobbed Dschemila, ‘do you really not know your own daughter?’

‘Yes, of course I know her.’

‘What are her two scars then?’

‘On her thigh is a scar from the bite of a dog, and on her breast is the mark of a burn, where she pulled a lamp over her when she was little.’

‘Then look at me, and see if I am not your daughter,’ said Dschemila, throwing off her clothes and showing her two scars.

And at the sight her mother embraced her, weeping.

‘Dear daughter,’ she cried, ‘what evil fate has befallen you?’

‘It was the ogre who carried me off first, and then bewitched me,’ answered Dschemila.

‘But what is to be done with you?’ asked her mother.

‘Hide me away, and tell no one anything about me. And you, dear cousin, say nothing to the neighbours, and if they should put questions, you can make answer that I have not yet been found.’

‘So I will,’ replied he.

Then he and her mother took her upstairs and hid her in a cupboard, where she stayed for a whole month, only going out to walk when all the world was asleep.

Meanwhile Dschemil had returned to his own home,

where his father and mother, his brothers and neighbours, greeted him joyfully.

‘When did you come back?’ said they, ‘and have you found Dschemila?’

‘No, I searched the whole world after her, and could hear nothing of her.’

‘Did you part company with the man who started with you?’

‘Yes; after three days he got so weak and useless he could not go on. It must be a month by now since he reached home again. I went on and visited every castle, and looked in every house. But there were no signs of her; and so I gave it up.’

And they answered him: ‘We told you before that it was no good. An ogre or an ogress must have snapped her up, and how can you expect to find her?’

‘I loved her too much to be still,’ he said.

But his friends did not understand, and soon they spoke to him again about it.

‘We will seek for a wife for you. There are plenty of girls prettier than Dschemila.’

‘I dare say; but I don’t want them.’

‘But what will you do with all the cushions and carpets, and beautiful things you bought for your house?’

‘They can stay in the chests.’

‘But the moths will eat them! For a few weeks, it is of no consequence, but after a year or two they will be quite useless.’

‘And if they have to lie there ten years I will have Dschemila, and her only, for my wife. For a month, or even two months, I will rest here quietly. Then I will go and seek her afresh.’

‘Oh, you are quite mad! Is she the only maiden in the world? There are plenty of others better worth having than she is.’

‘If there are I have not seen them! And why do

you make all this fuss? Every man knows his own business best.'

'Why, it is you who are making all the fuss yourself —'

But Dschemil turned and went into the house, for he did not want to quarrel.

Three months later a Jew, who was travelling across the desert, came to the castle, and laid himself down under the wall to rest.

In the evening the ogre saw him there and said to him, 'Jew, what are you doing here? Have you anything to sell?'

'I have only some clothes,' answered the Jew, who was in mortal terror of the ogre.

'Oh, don't be afraid of me,' said the ogre, laughing. 'I shall not eat you. Indeed, I mean to go a bit of the way with you myself.'

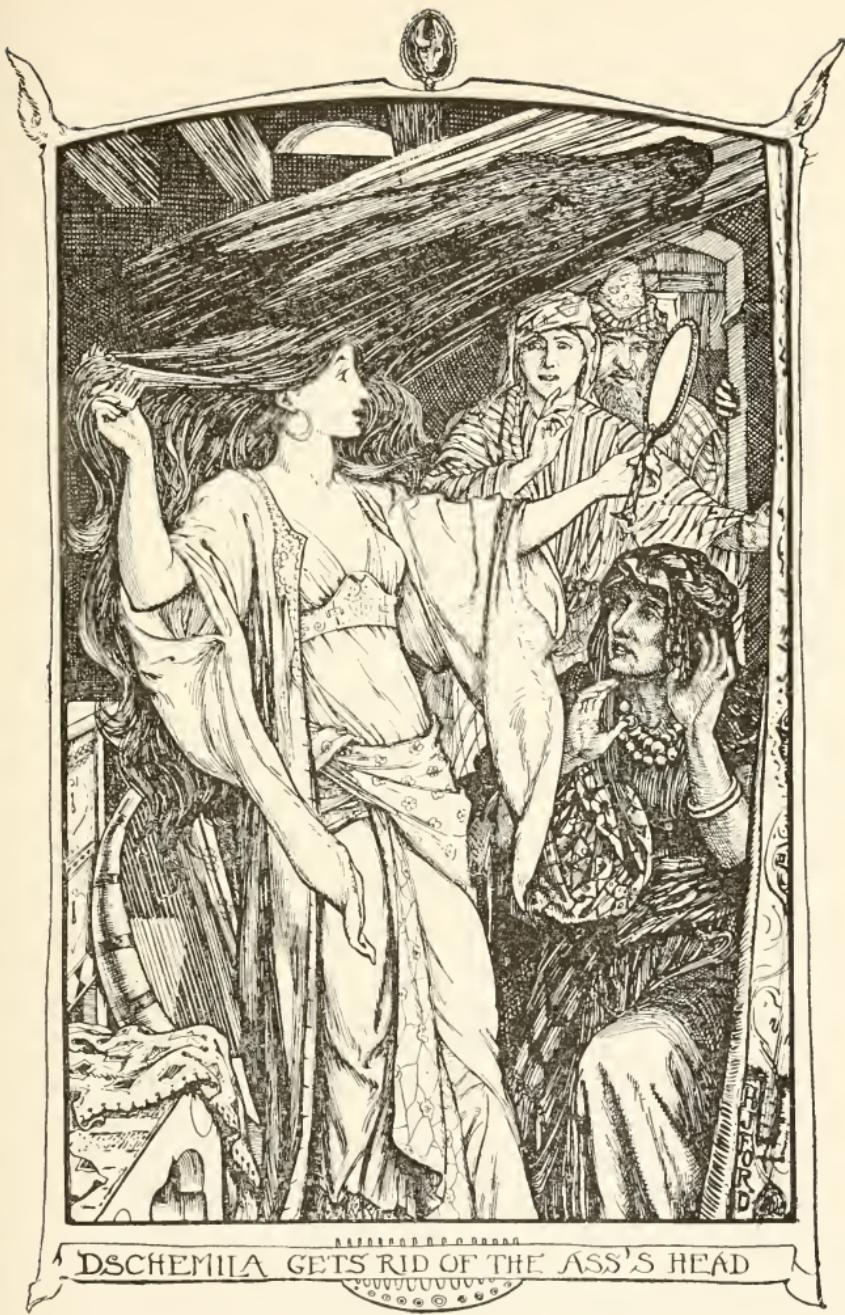
'I am ready, gracious sir,' replied the Jew, rising to his feet.

'Well, go straight on till you reach a town, and in that town you will find a maiden called Dschemila and a young man called Dschemil. Take this mirror and this comb with you, and say to Dschemila, "Your father, the ogre, greets you, and begs you to look at your face in this mirror, and it will appear as it was before, and to comb your hair with this comb, and it will be as formerly." If you do not carry out my orders, I will eat you the next time we meet.'

'Oh, I will obey you punctually,' cried the Jew.

After thirty days the Jew entered the gate of the town, and sat down in the first street he came to, hungry, thirsty, and very tired.

Quite by chance, Dschemil happened to pass by, and seeing a man sitting there, full in the glare of the sun, he stopped, and said, 'Get up at once, Jew; you will have a sunstroke if you sit in such a place.'



DSCHEMILA GETS RID OF THE ASS'S HEAD

‘Ah, good sir,’ replied the Jew, ‘for a whole month I have been travelling, and I am too tired to move.’

‘Which way did you come?’ asked Dschemil.

‘From out there,’ answered the Jew, pointing behind him.

‘And you have been travelling for a month, you say? Well, did you see anything remarkable?’

‘Yes, good sir; I saw a castle, and lay down to rest under its shadow. And an ogre woke me, and told me to come to this town, where I should find a young man called Dschemil, and a girl called Dschemila.’

‘My name is Dschemil. What does the ogre want with me?’

‘He gave me some presents for Dschemila. How can I see her?’

‘Come with me, and you shall give them into her own hands.’

So the two went together to the house of Dschemil’s uncle, and Dschemil led the Jew into his aunt’s room.

‘Aunt!’ he cried, ‘this Jew who is with me has come from the ogre, and has brought with him, as presents, a mirror and a comb which the ogre has sent her.’

‘But it may be only some wicked trick on the part of the ogre,’ said she.

‘Oh, I don’t think so,’ answered the young man, ‘give her the things.’

Then the maiden was called, and she came out of her hiding place, and went up to the Jew, saying, ‘Where have you come from, Jew?’

‘From your father the ogre.’

‘And what errand did he send you on?’

‘He told me I was to give you this mirror and this comb, and to say “Look in this mirror, and comb your hair with this comb, and both will become as they were formerly.”’

And Dschemila took the mirror and looked into it,

and combed her hair with the comb, and she had no longer an ass's head, but the face of a beautiful maiden.

Great was the joy of both mother and cousin at this wonderful sight, and the news that Dschemila had returned soon spread, and the neighbours came flocking in with greetings.

‘When did you come back?’

‘My cousin brought me.’

‘Why, he told us he could not find you!’

‘Oh, I did that on purpose,’ answered Dschemil. ‘I did not want everyone to know.’

Then he turned to his father and his mother, his brothers and his sisters-in-law, and said, ‘We must set to work at once, for the wedding will be to-day.’

A beautiful litter was prepared to carry the bride to her new home, but she shrank back, saying, ‘I am afraid, lest the ogre should carry me off again.’

‘How can the ogre get at you when we are all here?’ they said. ‘There are two thousand of us all told, and every man has his sword.’

‘He will manage it somehow,’ answered Dschemila, ‘he is a powerful king!’

‘She is right,’ said an old man. ‘Take away the litter, and let her go on foot if she is afraid.’

‘But it is absurd!’ exclaimed the rest; ‘how can the ogre get hold of her?’

‘I will not go,’ said Dschemila again. ‘You do not know that monster; I do.’

And while they were disputing the bridegroom arrived.

‘Let her alone. She shall stay in her father's house. After all, I can live here, and the wedding feast shall be made ready.’

And so they were married at last, and died without having had a single quarrel.

UDEA AND HER SEVEN BROTHERS

ONCE upon a time there was a man and his wife who had seven boys. The children lived in the open air and grew big and strong, and the six eldest spent part of every day hunting wild beasts. The youngest did not care so much about sport, and he often stayed with his mother.

One morning, however, as the whole seven were going out for a long expedition, they said to their aunt, 'Dear aunt, if a baby sister comes into the world to-day, wave a white handkerchief, and we will return immediately; but if it is only a boy, just brandish a sickle, and we will go on with what we are doing.'

Now the baby when it arrived really proved to be a girl, but as the aunt could not bear the boys, she thought it was a good opportunity to get rid of them. So she waved the sickle. And when the seven brothers saw the sign they said, 'Now we have nothing to go back for,' and plunged deeper into the desert.

The little girl soon grew to be a big girl, and she was called by all her friends (though she did not know it) 'Udea, who had driven her seven brothers into strange lands.'

One day, when she had been quarrelling with her playmates, the oldest among them said to her, 'It is a pity you were born, as ever since, your brothers have been obliged to roam about the world.'

Udea did not answer, but went home to her mother and asked her, 'Have I really got brothers?'

'Yes,' replied her mother, 'seven of them. But they

went away the day you were born, and I have never heard of them since.'

Then the girl said, 'I will go and look for them till I find them.'

'My dear child,' answered her mother, 'it is fifteen years since they left, and no man has seen them. How will you know which way to go?'

'Oh, I will follow them, north and south, east and west, and though I may travel far, yet some day I will find them.'

Then her mother said no more, but gave her a camel and some food, and a negro and his wife to take care of her, and she fastened a cowrie shell round the camel's neck for a charm, and bade her daughter go in peace.

During the first day the party journeyed on without any adventures, but the second morning the negro said to the girl, 'Get down, and let the negress ride instead of you.'

'Mother,' cried Udea.

'What is it?' asked her mother.

'Barka wants me to dismount from my camel.'

'Leave her alone, Barka,' commanded the mother, and Barka did not dare to persist.

But on the following day he said again to Udea, 'Get down, and let the negress ride instead of you,' and though Udea called to her mother she was too far away, and the mother never heard her. Then the negro seized her roughly and threw her on the ground, and said to his wife, 'Climb up,' and the negress climbed up, while the girl walked by the side. She had meant to ride all the way on her camel as her feet were bare and the stones cut them till the blood came. But she had to walk on till night, when they halted, and the next morning it was the same thing again. Weary and bleeding the poor girl began to cry, and implored the negro to let her ride, if only for a little. But he took no notice, except to bid her walk a little faster.

By-and-by they passed a caravan, and the negro

stopped and asked the leader if they had come across seven young men, who were thought to be hunting some-



THE NEGRO COMPELS UDEA TO WALK

where about. And the man answered, 'Go straight on, and by mid-day you will reach the castle where they live.'

When he heard this, the black melted some pitch in the sun, and smeared the girl with it, till she looked as

much a negro as he did. Next he bade his wife get down from the camel, and told Udea to mount, which she was thankful to do. So they arrived at her brothers' castle.

Leaving the camel kneeling at the entrance for Udea to dismount, the negro knocked loudly at the door, which was opened by the youngest brother, all the others being away hunting. He did not of course recognise Udea, but he knew the negro and his wife, and welcomed them gladly, adding, 'But who does the other negress belong to?'

'Oh, that is your sister!' said they.

'My sister! but she is coal black!'

'That may be, but she is your sister for all that.'

The young man asked no more questions, but took them into the castle, and he himself waited outside till his brothers came home.

As soon as they were alone, the negro whispered to Udea, 'If you dare to tell your brothers that I made you walk, or that I smeared you with pitch, I will kill you.'

'Oh, I will be sure to say nothing,' replied the girl, trembling, and at that moment the six elder brothers appeared in sight.

'I have some good news for you,' said the youngest, hastening to meet them; 'our sister is here!'

'Nonsense,' they answered. 'We have no sister; you know the child that was born was a boy.'

'But that was not true,' replied he, 'and here she is with the negro and his wife. Only — she too is black,' he added softly, but his brothers did not hear him, and pushed past joyfully.

'How are you, good old Barka?' they said to the negro; 'and how comes it that we never knew that we had a sister till now?' and they greeted Udea warmly, while she shed tears of relief and gladness.

The next morning they all agreed that they would not go out hunting. And the eldest brother took Udea on his knee, and she combed his hair and talked to him of their

home till the tears ran down his cheeks and dropped on her bare arm. And where the tears fell a white mark was made. Then the brother took a cloth and rubbed the place, and he saw that she was not black at all.

‘Tell me, who painted you over like this?’ cried he.

‘I am afraid to tell you,’ sobbed the girl, ‘the negro will kill me.’

‘Afraid! and with seven brothers?’

‘Well, I will tell you then,’ she answered. ‘The negro forced me to dismount from the camel and let his wife ride instead. And the stones cut my feet till they bled and I had to bind them. And after that, when we heard your castle was near by, he took pitch and smeared my body with it.’

Then the brother rushed in wrath from the room, and seizing his sword, cut off first the negro’s head and then his wife’s. He next brought in some warm water, and washed his sister all over, till her skin was white and shining again.

‘Ah, now we see that you are our sister!’ they all said. ‘What fools the negro must have thought us, to believe for an instant that we could have a sister who was black!’ And all that day and the next they remained in the castle.

But on the third morning they said to their sister: ‘Dear sister, you must lock yourself into this castle, with only the cat for company. And be very careful never to eat anything which she does not eat too. You must be sure to give her a bit of everything. In seven days we shall be back again.’

‘All right,’ she answered, and locked herself into the castle with the cat.

On the eighth day the brothers came home. ‘How are you?’ they asked. ‘You have not been anxious?’

‘No, why should I be anxious? The gates were fast locked, and in the castle are seven doors, and the seventh is of iron. What is there to frighten me?’

‘No one will try to hurt *us*,’ said the brothers, ‘for they fear us greatly. But for yourself, we implore you to do nothing without consulting the cat, who has grown up in the house, and take care never to neglect her advice.’

‘All right,’ replied Udea, ‘and whatever I eat she shall have half.’

‘Capital! and if ever you are in danger the cat will come and tell us — only elves and pigeons, which fly round your window, know where to find us.’

‘This is the first I have heard of the pigeons,’ said Udea. ‘Why did you not speak of them before?’

‘We always leave them food and water for seven days,’ replied the brothers.

‘Ah, sighed the girl, ‘if I had only known, I would have given them fresh food and fresh water; for after seven days anything becomes bad. Would it not be better if I fed them every day?’

‘Much better,’ said they, ‘and we shall feel any kindnesses you do towards the cat or the pigeons exactly as if they were shown to ourselves.’

‘Set your minds at ease,’ answered the girl, ‘I will treat them as if they were my brothers.’

That night the brothers slept in the castle, but after breakfast next morning they buckled on their weapons and mounted their horses, and rode off to their hunting grounds, calling out to their sister, ‘Mind you let nobody in till we come back.’

‘Very well,’ cried she, and kept the doors carefully locked for seven days and on the eighth the brothers returned as before. Then, after spending one evening with her, they departed as soon as they had done breakfast.

Directly they were out of sight Udea began to clean the house, and among the dust she found a bean which she ate.

‘What are you eating?’ asked the cat.

‘Nothing,’ said she.

‘Open your mouth, and let me see.’ The girl did as

she was told, and then the cat said 'Why did you not give me half?'

'I forgot,' answered she, 'but there are plenty of beans about, you can have as many as you like.'

'No, that won't do. I want half of that particular bean.'

'But how can I give it you? I tell you I have eaten it. I can roast you a hundred others.'

'No, I want half of that one.'

'Oh! do as you like, only go away!' cried she.

So the cat ran straight to the kitchen fire, and spit on it and put it out, and when Udea came to cook the supper she had nothing to light it with. 'Why did you put the fire out?' asked she.

'Just to show you how nicely you would be able to cook the supper. Didn't you tell me to do what I liked?'

The girl left the kitchen and climbed up on the roof of the castle and looked out. Far, far away, so far that she could hardly see it, was the glow of a fire. 'I will go and fetch a burning coal from there and light my fire,' thought she, and opened the door of the castle. When she reached the place where the fire was kindled, a hideous man-eater was crouching over it.

'Peace be with you, grandfather,' said she.

'The same to you,' replied the man-eater. 'What brings you here, Udea?'

'I came to ask for a lump of burning coal, to light my fire with.'

'Do you want a big lump or a little lump?'

'Why, what difference does it make?' said she.

'If you have a big lump you must give me a strip of your skin from your ear to your thumb, and if you have a little lump, you must give me a strip from your ear to your little finger.'

Udea, who thought that one sounded as bad as the other, said she would take the big lump, and when the man-eater had cut the skin, she went home again.

And as she hastened on a raven beheld the blood on the ground, and plastered it with earth, and stayed by her till she reached the castle. And as she entered the door he flew past, and she shrieked from fright, for up to that moment she had not seen him. In her terror she called after him, ' May you get the same start as you have given me ! '



' Why should you wish me harm,' asked the raven, pausing in his flight, ' when I have done you a service ? '

' What service have you done me ? ' said she.

' Oh, you shall soon see,' replied the raven, and with his bill he scraped away all the earth he had smeared over the blood and then flew away.

In the night the man-eater got up, and followed the blood till he came to Udea's castle. He entered through the gate which she had left open, and went on till he reached the inside of the house. But here he was stopped by the seven doors, six of wood and one of iron, and all fast locked. And he called through them 'Oh Udea, what did you see your grandfather doing?'

'I saw him spread silk under him, and silk over him, and lay himself down in a four-post bed.'

When he heard that, the man-eater broke in one door, and laughed and went away.

And the second night he came back, and asked her again what she had seen her grandfather doing, and she answered him as before, and he broke in another door, and laughed and went away, and so each night till he reached the seventh door. Then the maiden wrote a letter to her brothers, and bound it round the neck of a pigeon, and said to it, 'Oh, thou pigeon that servedst my father and my grandfather, carry this letter to my brothers, and come back at once.' And the pigeon flew away.

It flew and it flew and it flew till it found the brothers. The eldest unfastened the letter from the pigeon's neck, and read what his sister had written: 'I am in a great strait, my brothers. If you do not rescue me to-night, to-morrow I shall be no longer living, for the man-eater has broken open six doors, and only the iron door is left. So haste, haste, post haste.'

'Quick, quick! my brothers,' cried he.

'What is the matter?' asked they.

'If we cannot reach our sister to-night, to-morrow she will be the prey of the man-eater.'

And without more words they sprang on their horses, and rode like the wind.

The gate of the castle was thrown down, and they entered the court and called loudly to their sister. But the poor girl was so ill with fear and anxiety that she

could not even speak. Then the brothers dismounted and passed through the six open doors, till they stood before the iron one, which was still shut. ‘Udea, open!’ they cried, ‘it is only your brothers!’ And she arose and unlocked the door, and throwing herself on the neck of the eldest burst into tears.

‘Tell us what has happened,’ he said, ‘and how the man-eater traced you here?’

‘It is all the cat’s fault,’ replied Udea. ‘She put out my fire so that I could not cook. All about a bean! I ate one and forgot to give her any of it.’

‘But we told you so particularly,’ said the eldest brother, ‘never to eat anything without sharing it with the cat.’

‘Yes, but I tell you I forgot,’ answered Udea.

‘Does the man-eater come here every night?’ asked the brothers.

‘Every night,’ said Udea, ‘and he breaks one door in and then goes away.’

Then all the brothers cried together, ‘We will dig a great hole, and fill it with burning wood, and spread a covering over the top; and when the man-eater arrives we will push him into it.’ So they all set to work, and prepared the great hole, and set fire to the wood, till it was reduced to a mass of glowing charcoal. And when the man-eater came, and called as usual, ‘Udea, what did you see your grandfather doing?’ she answered, ‘I saw him pull off the ass’s skin and devour the ass, and he fell in the fire, and the fire burned him up.’

Then the man-eater was filled with rage, and he flung himself upon the iron door and burst it in. On the other side stood Udea’s seven brothers, who said, ‘Come, rest yourself a little on this mat.’ And the man-eater sat down, and he fell right into the burning pit which was under the mat, and they heaped on more wood, till nothing was left of him, not even a bone. Only one of his finger-nails was blown away, and fell into an upper



• UDEA • FOUND • LIFELESS •
• BY • HER • SEVEN • BROTHERS •

chamber where Udea was standing, and stuck under one of the nails of her own fingers. And she sank lifeless to the earth.

Meanwhile her brothers sat below waiting for her and wondering why she did not come. ‘What can have happened to her?’ exclaimed the eldest brother. ‘Perhaps she has fallen into the fire, too.’ So one of the others ran upstairs and found his sister stretched on the floor. ‘Udea! Udea!’ he cried, but she did not move or reply. Then he saw that she was dead, and rushed down to his brothers in the courtyard and called out, ‘Come quickly, our sister is dead!’ In a moment they were all beside her and knew that it was true, and they made a bier and laid her on it, and placed her across a camel, and said to the camel, ‘Take her to her mother, but be careful not to halt by the way, and let no man capture you, and see you kneel down before no man, save him who shall say “string”¹ to you. But to him who says “string,” then kneel.’

So the camel started, and when it had accomplished half its journey it met three men, who ran after it in order to catch it; but they could not. Then they cried ‘Stop!’ but the camel only went the faster. The three men panted behind till one said to the others, ‘Wait a minute! The string of my sandal is broken!’ The camel caught the word ‘string’ and knelt down at once, and the men came up and found a dead girl lying on a bier, with a ring on her finger. And as one of the young men took hold of her hand to pull off the ring, he knocked out the man-eater’s finger-nail, which had stuck there, and the maiden sat up and said, ‘Let him live who gave me life, and slay him who slew me!’ And when the camel heard the maiden speak, it turned and carried her back to her brothers.

Now the brothers were still seated in the court bewailing their sister, and their eyes were dim with weeping.

¹ ‘Riemen.’

so that they could hardly see. And when the camel stood before them they said, 'Perhaps it has brought back our sister!' and rose to give it a beating. But the camel knelt down and the girl dismounted, and they flung themselves on her neck and wept more than ever for gladness.

'Tell me,' said the eldest, as soon as he could speak, 'how it all came about, and what killed you.'

'I was waiting in the upper chamber,' said she, 'and a nail of the man-eater's stuck under my nail, and I fell dead upon the ground. That is all I know.'

'But who pulled out the nail?' asked he.

'A man took hold of my hand and tried to pull off my ring, and the nail jumped out and I was alive again. And when the camel heard me say "Let him live who gave me life, slay him who slew me!" it turned and brought me back to the castle. That is my story.'

She was silent and the eldest brother spoke. 'Will you listen to what I have to say, my brothers?'

And they replied, 'How should we not hear you? Are you not our father as well as our brother?'

'Then this is my advice. Let us take our sister back to our father and mother, that we may see them once more before they die.'

And the young men agreed, and they mounted their horses and placed their sister in a litter on the camel. So they set out.

At the end of five days' journey they reached the old home where their father and mother dwelt alone. And the heart of their father rejoiced, and he said to them, 'Dear sons, why did you go away and leave your mother and me to weep for you night and day?'

'Dear father,' answered the son, 'let us rest a little now, and then I will tell you everything from the beginning.'

'All right,' replied the father, and waited patiently for three days.

And on the morning of the fourth day the eldest brother said, 'Dear father, would you like to hear our adventures?'

'Certainly I should!'

'Well, it was our aunt who was the cause of our leaving home, for we agreed that if the baby was a sister she should wave a white handkerchief, and if it was a brother, she should brandish a sickle, for then there would be nothing to come back for, and we might wander far away. Now our aunt could not bear us, and hated us to live in the same house with her, so she brandished the sickle, and we went away. That is all our story.'

And that is all this story.

[*Märchen und Gedichte aus der Stadt Tripolis.* Von Hans Stumme.]

MOHAMMED WITH THE MAGIC FINGER

ONCE upon a time, there lived a woman who had a son and a daughter. One morning she said to them: 'I have heard of a town where there is no such thing as death: let us go and dwell there.' So she broke up her house, and went away with her son and daughter.

When she reached the city, the first thing she did was to look about and see if there was any churchyard, and when she found none, she exclaimed, 'This is a delightful spot. We will stay here for ever.'

By-and-by, her son grew to be a man, and he took for a wife a girl who had been born in the town. But after a little while he grew restless, and went away on his travels, leaving his mother, his wife, and his sister behind him.

He had not been gone many weeks when one evening his mother said, 'I am not well, my head aches dreadfully.'

'What did you say?' inquired her daughter-in-law.

'My head feels ready to split,' replied the old woman.

The daughter-in-law asked no more questions, but left the house, and went in haste to some butchers in the next street.

'I have got a woman to sell; what will you give me for her?' said she.

The butchers answered that they must see the woman first, and they all returned together.

Then the butchers took the woman and told her they must kill her.

‘But why?’ she asked.

‘Because,’ they said, ‘it is always our custom that when persons are ill and complain of their head they should be killed at once. It is a much better way than leaving them to die a natural death.’

‘Very well,’ replied the woman. ‘But leave, I pray you, my lungs and my liver untouched, till my son comes back. Then give both to him.’

But the men took them out at once, and gave them to the daughter-in-law, saying: ‘Put away these things till your husband returns.’ And the daughter-in-law took them, and hid them in a secret place.

When the old woman’s daughter, who had been in the woods, heard that her mother had been killed while she was out, she was filled with fright, and ran away as fast as she could. At last she reached a lonely spot far from the town, where she thought she was safe, and sat down on a stone, and wept bitterly. As she was sitting, sobbing, a man passed by.

‘What is the matter, little girl? Answer me! I will be your friend.’

‘Ah, sir, they have killed my mother; my brother is far away, and I have nobody.’

‘Will you come with me?’ asked the man.

‘Thankfully,’ said she, and he led her down, down, under the earth, till they reached a great city. Then he married her, and in course of time she had a son. And the baby was known throughout the city as ‘Mohammed with the magic finger,’ because, whenever he stuck out his little finger, he was able to see anything that was happening for as far as two days’ distance.

By-and-by, as the boy was growing bigger, his uncle returned from his long journey, and went straight to his wife.

‘Where are my mother and sister?’ he asked; but his wife answered: ‘Have something to eat first, and then I will tell you.’

But he replied: 'How can I eat till I know what has become of them?'

Then she fetched, from the upper chamber, a box full of money, which she laid before him, saying, 'That is the price of your mother. She sold well.'

'What do you mean?' he gasped.

'Oh, your mother complained one day that her head was aching, so I got in two butchers and they agreed to take her. However, I have got her lungs and liver hidden, till you came back, in a safe place.'

'And my sister?'

'Well, while the people were chopping up your mother she ran away, and I heard no more of her.'

'Give me my mother's liver and lungs,' said the young man. And she gave them to him. Then he put them in his pocket, and went away, saying: 'I can stay no longer in this horrible town. I go to seek my sister.'

Now, one day, the little boy stretched out his finger and said to his mother, 'My uncle is coming!'

'Where is he?' she asked.

'He is still two days' journey off: looking for us; but he will soon be here.' And in two days, as the boy had foretold, the uncle had found the hole in the earth, and arrived at the gate of the city. All his money was spent, and not knowing where his sister lived, he began to beg of all the people he saw.

'Here comes my uncle,' called out the little boy.

'Where?' asked his mother.

'Here at the house door;' and the woman ran out and embraced him, and wept over him. When they could both speak, he said: 'My sister, were you by when they killed my mother?'

'I was absent when they slew her,' replied she, 'and as I could do nothing, I ran away. But you, my brother, how did you get here?'

'By chance,' he said, 'after I had wandered far; but I did not know I should find you!'

‘My little boy told me you were coming,’ she explained, ‘when you were yet two days distant; he alone of all men has that great gift.’

But she did not tell him that her husband could change himself into a serpent, a dog, or a monster, when-



ever he pleased. He was a very rich man, and possessed large herds of camels, goats, sheep, cattle, horses and asses; all the best of their kind. And the next morning, the sister said: ‘Dear brother, go and watch our sheep, and when you are thirsty, drink their milk! ’

‘Very well,’ answered he, and he went.

Soon after, she said again, 'Dear brother, go and watch our goats.'

'But why? I like tending sheep better!'

'Oh, it is much nicer to be a goatherd,' she said; so he took the goats out.

When he was gone, she said to her husband, 'You must kill my brother, for I cannot have him living here with me.'

'But, my dear, why should I? He has done me no harm.'

'I wish you to kill him,' she answered, 'or if not I will leave.'

'Oh, all right, then,' said he; 'to-morrow I will change myself into a serpent, and hide myself in the date barrel; and when he comes to fetch dates I will sting him in the hand.'

'That will do very well,' said she.

When the sun was up next day, she called to her brother, 'Go and mind the goats.'

'Yes, of course,' he replied; but the little boy called out: 'Uncle, I want to come with you.'

'Delighted,' said the uncle, and they started together.

After they had got out of sight of the house the boy said to him, 'Dear uncle, my father is going to kill you. He has changed himself into a serpent, and has hidden himself in the date barrel. My mother has told him to do it.'

'And what am I to do?' asked the uncle.

'I will tell you. When we bring the goats back to the house, and my mother says to you, "I am sure you must be hungry: get a few dates out of the cask," just say to me, "I am not feeling very well, Mohammed, you go and get them for me."'

So when they reached the house the sister came out to meet them, saying, 'Dear brother, you must certainly be hungry: go and get a few dates.'

But he answered, 'I am not feeling very well. Mohammed, you go and get them for me.'

'Of course I will,' replied the little boy, and ran at once to the cask.

'No, no,' his mother called after him; 'come here directly! Let your uncle fetch them himself!'

But the boy would not listen, and crying out to her, 'I would rather get them,' thrust his hand into the date cask.

Instead of the fruit, it struck against something cold and slimy, and he whispered softly, 'Keep still; it is I, your son!'

Then he picked up his dates and went away to his uncle.

'Here they are, dear uncle; eat as many as you want.' And his uncle ate them.

When he saw that the uncle did not mean to come near the cask, the serpent crawled out and regained his proper shape.

'I am thankful I did not kill him,' he said to his wife; 'for, after all, he is my brother-in-law, and it would have been a great sin!'

'Either you kill him or I leave you,' said she.

'Well, well!' sighed the man, 'to-morrow I will do it.'

The woman let that night go by without doing anything further, but at daybreak she said to her brother, 'Get up, brother; it is time to take the goats to pasture!'

'All right,' cried he.

'I will come with you, uncle,' called out the little boy.

'Yes, come along,' replied he.

But the mother ran up, saying, 'The child must not go out in this cold or he will be ill;' to which he only answered, 'Nonsense! I am going, so it is no use your talking! I am going! I am! I am!'

'Then go!' she said.

And so they started, driving the goats in front of them.

When they reached the pasture the boy said to his uncle: 'Dear uncle, this night my father means to kill you. While we are away he will creep into your room and hide in the straw. Directly we get home my mother will say to you, "Take that straw and give it to the sheep," and, if you do, he will bite you.'

'Then what am I to do?' asked the man.

'Oh, do not be afraid, dear uncle! I will kill my father myself.'

'All right,' replied the uncle.

As they drove back the goats towards the house, the sister cried: 'Be quick, dear brother, go and get me some straw for the sheep.'

'Let me go,' said the boy.

'You are not big enough; your uncle will get it,' replied she.

'We will both get it,' answered the boy; 'come, uncle, let us go and fetch that straw!'

'All right,' replied the uncle, and they went to the door of the room.

'It seems very dark,' said the boy; 'I must go and get a light;' and when he came back with one, he set fire to the straw, and the serpent was burnt.

Then the mother broke into sobs and tears. 'Oh, you wretched boy! What have you done? Your father was in that straw, and you have killed him!'

'Now, how was I to know that my father was lying in that straw, instead of in the kitchen?' said the boy.

But his mother only wept the more, and sobbed out, 'From this day you have no father. You must do without him as best you can!'

'Why did you marry a serpent?' asked the boy. 'I thought he was a man! How did he learn those odd tricks?'

As the sun rose, she woke her brother, and said, 'Go and take the goats to pasture!'

‘I will come too,’ said the little boy.

‘Go then!’ said his mother, and they went together.

On the way the boy began: ‘Dear uncle, this night my mother means to kill both of us, by poisoning us with the bones of the serpent, which she will grind to powder and sprinkle in our food.’

‘And what are we to do?’ asked the uncle.

‘I will kill *her*, dear uncle. I do not want either a father or a mother like that!’

When they came home in the evening they saw the woman preparing supper, and secretly scattering the powdered bones of the serpent on one side of the dish. On the other, where she meant to eat herself, there was no poison.

And the boy whispered to his uncle, ‘Dear uncle, be sure you eat from the same side of the dish as I do!’

‘All right,’ said the uncle.

So they all three sat down to the table, but before they helped themselves the boy said, ‘I am thirsty, mother; will you get me some milk?’

‘Very well,’ said she, ‘but you had better begin your supper.’

And when she came back with the milk they were both eating busily.

‘Sit down and have something too,’ said the boy, and she sat down and helped herself from the dish, but at the very first moment she sank dead upon the ground.

‘She has got what she meant for us,’ observed the boy; ‘and now we will sell all the sheep and cattle.’

So the sheep and cattle were sold, and the uncle and nephew took the money and went to see the world.

For ten days they travelled through the desert, and then they came to a place where the road parted in two.

‘Uncle!’ said the boy.

‘Well, what is it?’ replied he.

‘You see these two roads? You must take one, and I the other; for the time has come when we must part.’

But the uncle cried, 'No, no, my boy, we will keep together always.'

'Alas! that cannot be,' said the boy; 'so tell me which way you will go.'

'I will go to the west,' said the uncle.

'One word before I leave you,' continued the boy. 'Beware of any man who has red hair and blue eyes. Take no service under him.'

'All right,' replied the uncle, and they parted.

For three days the man wandered on without any food, till he was very hungry. Then, when he was almost fainting, a stranger met him and said, 'Will you work for me?'

'By contract?' asked the man.

'Yes, by contract,' replied the stranger, 'and whichever of us breaks it, shall have a strip of skin taken from his body.'

'All right,' replied the man; 'what shall I have to do?'

'Every day you must take the sheep out to pasture, and carry my old mother on your shoulders, taking great care her feet shall never touch the ground. And, besides that, you must catch, every evening, seven singing birds for my seven sons.'

'That is easily done,' said the man.

Then they went back together, and the stranger said, 'Here are your sheep; and now stoop down, and let my mother climb on your back.'

'Very good,' answered Mohammed's uncle.

The new shepherd did as he was told, and returned in the evening with the old woman on his back, and the seven singing birds in his pocket, which he gave to the seven boys, when they came to meet him. So the days passed, each one exactly like the other.

At last, one night, he began to weep, and cried: 'Oh, what have I done, that I should have to perform such hateful tasks?'

And his nephew Mohammed saw him from afar, and thought to himself, 'My uncle is in trouble — I must go and help him;' and the next morning he went to his master and said: 'Dear master, I must go to my



uncle, and I wish to send him here instead of myself, while I serve under his master. And that you may know it is he and no other man, I will give him my staff, and put my mantle on him.'

'All right,' said the master.

Mohammed set out on his journey, and in two days he arrived at the place where his uncle was standing with the old woman on his back, trying to catch the birds as they flew past. And Mohammed touched him on the arm, and spoke: 'Dear uncle, did I not warn you never to take service under any blue-eyed red-haired man?'

'But what could I do?' asked the uncle. 'I was hungry, and he passed, and we signed a contract.'

'Give the contract to me!' said the young man.

'Here it is,' replied the uncle, holding it out.

'Now,' continued Mohammed, 'let the old woman get down from your back.'

'Oh no, I mustn't do that!' cried he.

But the nephew paid no attention, and went on talking: 'Do not worry yourself about the future. I see my way out of it all. And, first, you must take my stick and my mantle and leave this place. After two days' journey, straight before you, you will come to some tents which are inhabited by shepherds. Go in there, and wait.'

'All right!' answered the uncle.

Then Mohammed with the Magic Finger picked up a stick and struck the old woman with it, saying, 'Get down, and look after the sheep; I want to go to sleep.'

'Oh, certainly!' replied she.

So Mohammed lay down comfortably under a tree and slept till evening. Towards sunset he woke up and said to the old woman: 'Where are the singing birds which you have got to catch?'

'You never told me anything about that,' replied she.

'Oh, did n't I?' he answered. 'Well, it is part of your business, and if you don't do it, I shall just kill you.'

'Of course I will catch them!' cried she in a hurry, and ran about the bushes after the birds, till thorns pierced her foot, and she shrieked from pain and exclaimed, 'Oh dear, how unlucky I am! and how

abominably this man is treating me!' However, at last she managed to catch the seven birds, and brought them to Mohammed, saying, 'Here they are!'

'Then now we will go back to the house,' said he.

When they had gone some way he turned to her sharply:

'Be quick and drive the sheep home, for I do not know where their fold is.' And she drove them before her. By-and-by the young man spoke:

'Look here, old hag; if you say anything to your son about my having struck you, or about my not being the old shepherd, I'll kill you!'

'Oh, no, of course I won't say anything!'

When they got back, the son said to his mother: 'That is a good shepherd I've got, is n't he?'

'Oh, a splendid shepherd!' answered she. 'Why, look how fat the sheep are, and how much milk they give!'

'Yes, indeed!' replied the son, as he rose to get supper for his mother and the shepherd.

In the time of Mohammed's uncle, the shepherd had had nothing to eat but the scraps left by the old woman; but the new shepherd was not going to be content with that.

'You will not touch the food till I have had as much as I want,' whispered he.

'Very good!' replied she. And when he had had enough, he said:

'Now, eat!' But she wept, and cried: 'That was not written in your contract. You were only to have what I left!'

'If you say a word more, I will kill you!' said he.

The next day he took the old woman on his back, and drove the sheep in front of him till he was some distance from the house, when he let her fall, and said: 'Quick! go and mind the sheep!'

Then he took a ram, and killed it. He lit a fire and broiled some of its flesh, and called to the old woman:

‘Come and eat with me!’ and she came. But instead of letting her eat quietly, he took a large lump of the meat and rammed it down her throat with his crook, so that she died. And when he saw she was dead, he said: ‘That is what you have got for tormenting my uncle!’ and left her lying where she was, while he went after the singing birds. It took him a long time to catch them; but at length he had the whole seven hidden in the pockets of his tunic, and then he threw the old woman’s body into some bushes, and drove the sheep before him, back to their fold. And when they drew near the house the seven boys came to meet him, and he gave a bird to each.

‘Why are you weeping?’ asked the boys, as they took their birds.

‘Because your grandmother is dead!’ And they ran and told their father. Then the man came up and said to Mohammed: ‘What was the matter? How did she die?’

And Mohammed answered: ‘I was tending the sheep when she said to me, “Kill me that ram; I am hungry!” So I killed it, and gave her the meat. But she had no teeth, and it choked her.’

‘But why did you kill the ram, instead of one of the sheep?’ asked the man.

‘What was I to do?’ said Mohammed. ‘I had to obey orders!’

‘Well, I must see to her burial!’ said the man; and the next morning Mohammed drove out the sheep as usual, thinking to himself, ‘Thank goodness I’ve got rid of the old woman! Now for the boys!’

All day long he looked after the sheep, and towards evening he began to dig some little holes in the ground, out of which he took six scorpions. These he put in his pockets, together with one bird which he caught. After this he drove his flock home.

When he approached the house the boys came out to meet him as before, saying: ‘Give me my bird!’ and he

put a scorpion into the hand of each, and it stung him, and he died. But to the youngest only he gave a bird.

As soon as he saw the boys lying dead on the ground, Mohammed lifted up his voice and cried loudly: 'Help, help! the children are dead!'

And the people came running fast, saying: 'What has happened? How have they died?'

And Mohammed answered: 'It was your own fault! The boys had been accustomed to birds, and in this bitter cold their fingers grew stiff, and could hold nothing, so that the birds flew away, and their spirits flew with them. Only the youngest, who managed to keep tight hold of his bird, is still alive.'

And the father groaned, and said, 'I have borne enough! Bring no more birds, lest I lose the youngest also!'

'All right,' said Mohammed.

As he was driving the sheep out to grass he said to his master: 'Out there is a splendid pasture, and I will keep the sheep there for two or, perhaps, three days, so do not be surprised at our absence.'

'Very good!' said the man; and Mohammed started. For two days he drove them on and on, till he reached his uncle, and said to him, 'Dear uncle, take these sheep and look after them. I have killed the old woman and the boys, and the flock I have brought to you!'

Then Mohammed returned to his master; and on the way he took a stone and beat his own head with it till it bled, and bound his hands tight, and began to scream. The master came running and asked, 'What is the matter?'

And Mohammed answered: 'While the sheep were grazing, robbers came and drove them away, and because I tried to prevent them, they struck me on the head and bound my hands. See how bloody I am!'

'What shall we do?' said the master; 'are the animals far off?'

‘So far that you are not likely ever to see them again,’ replied Mohammed. ‘This is the fourth day since the robbers came down. How should you be able to overtake them?’

‘Then go and herd the cows!’ said the man.

‘All right!’ replied Mohammed, and for two days he went. But on the third day he drove the cows to his uncle, first cutting off their tails. Only one cow he left behind him.

‘Take these cows, dear uncle,’ said he. ‘I am going to teach that man a lesson.’

‘Well, I suppose you know your own business best,’ said the uncle. ‘And certainly he almost worried me to death.’

So Mohammed returned to his master, carrying the cows’ tails tied up in a bundle on his back. When he came to the sea-shore, he stuck all the tails in the sand, and went and buried the one cow, whose tail he had not cut off, up to her neck, leaving the tail projecting. After he had got everything ready, he began to shriek and scream as before, till his master and all the other servants came running to see what was the matter.

‘What in the world has happened?’ they cried.

‘The sea has swallowed up the cows,’ said Mohammed, ‘and nothing remains but their tails. But if you are quick and pull hard, perhaps you may get them out again!’

The master ordered each man instantly to take hold of a tail, but at the first pull they nearly tumbled backwards, and the tails were left in their hands.

‘Stop,’ cried Mohammed, ‘you are doing it all wrong. You have just pulled off their tails, and the cows have sunk to the bottom of the sea.’

‘See if you can do it any better,’ said they; and Mohammed ran to the cow which he had buried in the rough grass, and took hold of her tail and dragged the animal out at once.

‘There! that is the way to do it!’ said he, ‘I told you you knew nothing about it!’

The men slunk away, much ashamed of themselves; but the master came up to Mohammed. ‘Get you gone!’ he said, ‘there is nothing more for you to do! You have killed my mother, you have slain my children, you have stolen my sheep, you have drowned my cows; I have now no work to give you.’

‘First give me the strip of your skin which belongs to me of right, as you have broken your contract!’

‘That a judge shall decide,’ said the master; ‘we will go before him.’

‘Yes, we will,’ replied Mohammed. And they went before the judge.

‘What is your case?’ asked the judge of the master.

‘My lord,’ said the man, bowing low, ‘my shepherd here has robbed me of everything. He has killed my children and my old mother; he has stolen my sheep, he has drowned my cows in the sea.’

The shepherd answered: ‘He must pay me what he owes me, and then I will go.’

‘Yes, that is the law,’ said the judge.

‘Very well,’ returned the master, ‘let him reckon up how long he has been in my service.’

‘That won’t do,’ replied Mohammed, ‘I want my strip of skin, as we agreed in the contract.’

Seeing there was no help for it, the master cut a bit of skin, and gave it to Mohammed, who went off at once to his uncle.

‘Now we are rich, dear uncle,’ cried he, ‘we will sell our cows and sheep and go to a new country. This one is no longer the place for us.’

The sheep were soon sold, and the two comrades started on their travels. That night they reached some Bedouin tents, where they had supper with the Arabs. Before they lay down to sleep, Mohammed called the

owner of the tent aside. ‘Your greyhound will eat my strip of leather,’ he said to the Arab.

‘No; do not fear.’

‘But supposing he does?’

‘Well, then, I will give him to you in exchange,’ replied the Arab.

Mohammed waited till everyone was fast asleep, then he rose softly, and tearing the bit of skin in pieces, threw it down before the greyhound, setting up wild shrieks as he did so.

‘Oh, master, said I not well that your dog would eat my thong?’

‘Be quiet, don’t make such a noise, and you shall have the dog.’

So Mohammed put a leash round his neck, and led him away.

In the evening they arrived at the tents of some more Bedouin, and asked for shelter. After supper Mohammed said to the owner of the tent, ‘Your ram will kill my greyhound.’

‘Oh, no, he won’t.’

‘And supposing he does?’

‘Then you can take him in exchange.’

So in the night Mohammed killed the greyhound, and laid his body across the horns of the ram. Then he set up shrieks and yells, till he roused the Arab, who said: ‘Take the ram and go away.’

Mohammed did not need to be told twice, and at sunset he reached another Bedouin encampment. He was received kindly, as usual, and after supper he said to his host: ‘Your daughter will kill my ram.’

‘Be silent, she will do nothing of the sort; my daughter does not need to steal meat, she has some every day.’

‘Very well, I will go to sleep; but if anything happens to my ram I will call out.’

‘If my daughter touches anything belonging to my

guest I will kill her,' said the Arab, and went to his bed.

When everybody was asleep, Mohammed got up, killed the ram, and took out his liver, which he broiled on the fire. He placed a piece of it in the girl's hands, and laid some more on her night-dress while she slept and knew nothing about it. After this he began to cry out loudly.

'What is the matter? be silent at once!' called the Arab.

'How can I be silent, when my ram, which I loved like a child, has been slain by your daughter?'

'But my daughter is asleep,' said the Arab.

'Well, go and see if she has not some of the flesh about her.'

'If she has, you may take her in exchange for the ram;' and as they found the flesh exactly as Mohammed had foretold, the Arab gave his daughter a good beating, and then told her to get out of sight, for she was now the property of this stranger.

They wandered in the desert till, at nightfall, they came to a Bedouin encampment, where they were hospitably bidden to enter. Before lying down to sleep, Mohammed said to the owner of the tent: 'Your mare will kill my wife.'

'Certainly not.'

'And if she does?'

'Then you shall take the mare in exchange.'

When everyone was asleep, Mohammed said softly to his wife: 'Maiden, I have got such a clever plan! I am going to bring in the mare and put it at your feet, and I will cut you, just a few little flesh wounds, so that you may be covered with blood, and everybody will suppose you to be dead. But remember that you must not make a sound, or we shall both be lost.'

This was done, and then Mohammed wept and wailed louder than ever.

The Arab hastened to the spot and cried, 'Oh, cease making that terrible noise! Take the mare and go; but carry off the dead girl with you. She can lie quite easily across the mare's back.'

Then Mohammed and his uncle picked up the girl, and, placing her on the mare's back, led it away, being very careful to walk one on each side, so that she might not slip down and hurt herself. After the Arab tents could be seen no longer, the girl sat up on the saddle and looked about her, and as they were all hungry they tied up the mare, and took out some dates to eat. When they had finished, Mohammed said to his uncle: 'Dear uncle, the maiden shall be your wife; I give her to you. But the money we got from the sheep and cows we will divide between us. You shall have two-thirds and I will have one. For you will have a wife, but I never mean to marry. And now, go in peace, for never more will you see me. The bond of bread and salt is at an end between us.'

So they wept, and fell on each other's necks, and asked forgiveness for any wrongs in the past. Then they parted and went their ways.

[*Märchen und Gedichte aus der Stadt Tripolis.* Von Hans Stumme.]

THE JACKAL AND THE SPRING

ONCE upon a time all the streams and rivers ran so dry that the animals did not know how to get water. After a very long search, which had been quite in vain, they found a tiny spring, which only wanted to be dug deeper so as to yield plenty of water. So the beasts said to each other, 'Let us dig a well, and then we shall not fear to die of thirst;' and they all consented except the jackal, who hated work of any kind, and generally got somebody to do it for him.

When they had finished their well, they held a council as to who should be made the guardian of the well, so that the jackal might not come near it, for, they said, 'he would not work, therefore he shall not drink.'

After some talk it was decided that the rabbit should be left in charge; then all the other beasts went back to their homes.

When they were out of sight the jackal arrived. 'Good morning! Good morning, rabbit!' and the rabbit politely said, 'Good morning!' Then the jackal unfastened the little bag that hung at his side, and pulled out of it a piece of honeycomb which he began to eat, and turning to the rabbit he remarked :

'As you see, rabbit, I am not thirsty in the least, and this is nicer than any water.'

'Give me a bit,' asked the rabbit. So the jackal handed him a very little morsel.

'Oh, how good it is!' cried the rabbit; 'give me a little more, dear friend!'

But the jackal answered, 'If you really want me to give you some more, you must have your paws tied behind you, and lie on your back, so that I can pour it into your mouth.'

The rabbit did as he was bid, and when he was tied tight and popped on his back, the jackal ran to the spring and drank as much as he wanted. When he had quite finished he returned to his den.

In the evening the animals all came back, and when they saw the rabbit lying with his paws tied, they said to him: 'Rabbit, how did you let yourself be taken in like this?'

'It was all the fault of the jackal,' replied the rabbit; 'he tied me up like this, and told me he would give me something nice to eat. It was all a trick just to get at our water.'

'Rabbit, you are no better than an idiot to have let the jackal drink our water when he would not help to find it. Who shall be our next watchman? We must have somebody a little sharper than you!' and the little hare called out, 'I will be the watchman.'

The following morning the animals all went their various ways, leaving the little hare to guard the spring. When they were out of sight the jackal came back. 'Good morning! good morning, little hare,' and the little hare politely said, 'Good morning.'

'Can you give me a pinch of snuff?' said the jackal.

'I am so sorry, but I have none,' answered the little hare.

The jackal then came and sat down by the little hare, and unfastened his little bag, pulling out of it a piece of honeycomb. He licked his lips and exclaimed, 'Oh, little hare, if you only knew how good it is!'

'What is it?' asked the little hare.

'It is something that moistens my throat so deliciously,' answered the jackal, 'that after I have eaten it I don't

feel thirsty any more, while I am sure that all you other beasts are for ever wanting water.'

'Give me a bit, dear friend,' asked the little hare.

'Not so fast,' replied the jackal. 'If you really wish to enjoy what you are eating, you must have your paws tied behind you, and lie on your back, so that I can pour it into your mouth.'

'You can tie them, only be quick,' said the little hare, and when he was tied tight and popped on his back, the jackal went quietly down to the well, and drank as much as he wanted. When he had quite finished he returned to his den.

In the evening the animals all came back; and when they saw the little hare with his paws tied, they said to him: 'Little hare, how did you let yourself be taken in like this? Didn't you boast you were very sharp? You undertook to guard our water; now show us how much is left for us to drink!'

'It is all the fault of the jackal,' replied the little hare. 'He told me he would give me something nice to eat if I would just let him tie my hands behind my back.'

Then the animals said, 'Who can we trust to mount guard now?' And the panther answered, 'Let it be the tortoise.'

The following morning the animals all went their various ways, leaving the tortoise to guard the spring. When they were out of sight the jackal came back. 'Good morning, tortoise; good morning.'

But the tortoise took no notice.

'Good morning, tortoise; good morning.' But still the tortoise pretended not to hear.

Then the jackal said to himself, 'Well, to-day I have only got to manage a bigger idiot than before. I shall just kick him on one side, and then go and have a drink.' So he went up to the tortoise and said to him in a soft voice, 'Tortoise! tortoise!' but the tortoise took no notice. Then the jackal kicked him out of the way, and went to the

well and began to drink, but scarcely had he touched the water, than the tortoise seized him by the leg. The jackal shrieked out : ‘ Oh, you will break my leg ! ’ but the tortoise only held on the tighter. The jackal then took his bag and tried to make the tortoise smell the honey-comb he had inside ; but the tortoise turned away his head and smelt nothing. At last the jackal said to the tortoise, ‘ I should like to give you my bag and everything in it,’ but the only answer the tortoise made was to grasp the jackal’s leg tighter still.

So matters stood when the other animals came back. The moment he saw them, the jackal gave a violent tug, and managed to free his leg, and then took to his heels as fast as he could. And the animals all said to the tortoise :

‘ Well done, tortoise, you have proved your courage ; now we can drink from our well in peace, as you have got the better of that thieving jackal ! ’

[*Contes Populaires des Bassoutos*; recueillis et traduits par E. Jacottet.
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THE DAUGHTER OF BUK' ETTEMSUCH

ONCE upon a time there lived a man who had seven daughters. For a long time they dwelt quite happily at home together, then one morning the father called them all before him and said:

‘Your mother and I are going on a journey, and as we do not know how long we may be away, you will find enough provisions in the house to last you three years. But see you do not open the door to any one till we come home again.’

‘Very well, dear father,’ replied the girls.

For two years they never left the house or unlocked the door; but one day, when they had washed their clothes, and were spreading them out on the roof to dry, the girls looked down into the street where people were walking to and fro, and across to the market, with its stalls of fresh meat, vegetable, and other nice things.

‘Come here,’ cried one. ‘It makes me quite hungry! Why should not we have our share? Let one of us go to the market, and buy meat and vegetables.’

‘Oh, we must n’t do that!’ said the youngest. ‘You know our father forbade us to open the door till he came home again.’

Then the eldest sister sprang at her and struck her, the second spit at her, the third abused her, the fourth pushed her, the fifth flung her to the ground, and the sixth tore her clothes. Then they left her lying on the floor, and went out with a basket.

In about an hour they came back with the basket full

of meat and vegetables, which they put in a pot, and set on the fire, quite forgetting that the house door stood wide open. The youngest sister, however, took no part in all this, and when dinner was ready and the table laid, she stole softly out to the entrance hall, and hid herself behind a great cask which stood in one corner.

Now, while the other sisters were enjoying their feast, a witch passed by, and catching sight of the open door, she walked in. She went up to the eldest girl, and said: 'Where shall I begin on you, you fat bolster?'

'You must begin,' answered she 'with the hand which struck my little sister.'

So the witch gobbled her up, and when the last scrap had disappeared, she came to the second and asked: 'Where shall I begin on you, my fat bolster?'

And the second answered, 'You must begin on my mouth, which spat on my sister.'

And so on to the rest; and very soon the whole six had disappeared. And as the witch was eating the last mouthful of the last sister, the youngest, who had been crouching, frozen with horror, behind the barrel, ran out through the open door into the street. Without looking behind her, she hastened on and on, as fast as her feet would carry her, till she saw an ogre's castle standing in front of her. In a corner near the door she spied a large pot, and she crept softly up to it and pulled the cover over it, and went to sleep.

By-and-by the ogre came home. 'Fee, Fo, Fum,' cried he, 'I smell the smell of a man. What ill fate has brought him here?' And he looked through all the rooms, and found nobody. 'Where are you?' he called. 'Do not be afraid, I will do you no harm.'

But the girl was still silent.

'Come out, I tell you,' repeated the ogre. 'Your life is quite safe. If you are an old man, you shall be my father. If you are a boy, you shall be my son. If your years are as many as mine, you shall be my brother. If

you are an old woman, you shall be my mother. If you are a young one, you shall be my daughter. If you are middle-aged, you shall be my wife. So come out, and fear nothing.'

Then the maiden came out of her hiding-place, and stood before him.

'Fear nothing,' said the ogre again; and when he went away to hunt he left her to look after the house. In the evening he returned, bringing with him hares, partridges, and gazelles, for the girl's supper; for himself he only cared for the flesh of men, which she cooked for him. He also gave into her charge the keys of six rooms, but the key of the seventh he kept himself.

And time passed on, and the girl and the ogre still lived together.

She called him 'Father,' and he called her 'Daughter,' and never once did he speak roughly to her.

One day the maiden said to him, 'Father, give me the key of the upper chamber.'

'No, my daughter,' replied the ogre. 'There is nothing there that is any use to you.'

'But I want the key,' she repeated again.

However the ogre took no notice, and pretended not to hear. The girl began to cry, and said to herself: 'To-night, when he thinks I am asleep, I will watch and see where he hides it'; and after she and the ogre had supped, she bade him good-night, and left the room. In a few minutes she stole quietly back, and watched from behind a curtain. In a little while she saw the ogre take the key from his pocket, and hide it in a hole in the ground before he went to bed. And when all was still she took out the key, and went back to the house.

The next morning the ogre awoke with the first ray of light, and the first thing he did was to look for the key. It was gone, and he guessed at once what had become of it.

But instead of getting into a great rage, as most ogres



The Maiden creeps out of the Pot-

would have done, he said to himself, 'If I wake the maiden up I shall only frighten her. For to-day she shall keep the key, and when I return to-night it will be time enough to take it from her.' So he went off to hunt.

The moment he was safe out of the way, the girl ran upstairs and opened the door of the room, which was quite bare. The one window was closed, and she threw back the lattice and looked out. Beneath lay a garden which belonged to the Prince, and in the garden was an ox, who was drawing up water from the well all by himself—for there was nobody to be seen anywhere. The ox raised his head at the noise the girl made in opening the lattice, and said to her, 'Good morning, O daughter of Buk Ettemsuch! Your father is feeding you up till you are nice and fat, and then he will put you on a spit and cook you.'

These words so frightened the maiden that she burst into tears and ran out of the room. All day she wept, and when the ogre came home at night, no supper was ready for him.

'What are you crying for?' said he. 'Where is my supper, and is it you who have opened the upper chamber?'

'Yes, I opened it,' answered she.

'And what did the ox say to you?'

'He said, "Good morning, O daughter of Buk Ettemsuch. Your father is feeding you up till you are nice and fat, and then he will put you on a spit and cook you."'

'Well, to-morrow you can go to the window and say, "My father is feeding me up till I am nice and fat, but he does not mean to eat me. If I had one of your eyes I would use it for a mirror, and look at myself before and behind; and your girths should be loosened, and you should be blind—seven days and seven nights."'

'All right,' replied the girl, and the next morning, when the ox spoke to her, she answered him as she had

been told, and he fell down straight upon the ground, and lay there seven days and seven nights. But the flowers in the garden withered, for there was no one to water them.

When the prince came into his garden he found nothing but yellow stalks; in the midst of them the ox was lying. With a blow from his sword he killed the animal, and, turning to his attendants, he said, ‘Go and fetch another ox!’ And they brought in a great beast, and he drew the water out of the well, and the flowers revived, and the grass grew green again. Then the prince called his attendants and went away.

The next morning the girl heard the noise of the water-wheel, and she opened the lattice and looked out of the window.

‘Good morning, O daughter of Buk Ettemsuch!’ said the new ox. ‘Your father is feeding you up till you are nice and fat, and then he will put you on a spit and cook you.’

And the maiden answered: ‘My father is feeding me up till I am nice and fat, but he does not mean to eat me. If I had one of your eyes I would use it for a mirror, and look at myself before and behind; and your girths should be loosened, and you should be blind — seven days and seven nights.’

Directly she uttered these words the ox fell to the ground and lay there, seven days and seven nights. Then he arose and began to draw the water from the well. He had only turned the wheel once or twice, when the prince took it into his head to visit his garden and see how the new ox was getting on. When he entered the ox was working busily; but in spite of that the flowers and grass were dried up. And the prince drew his sword, and rushed at the ox to slay him, as he had done the other. But the ox fell on his knees and said:

‘My lord, only spare my life, and let me tell you how it happened.’

‘How what happened?’ asked the prince.

‘My lord, a girl looked out of that window and spoke a few words to me, and I fell to the ground. For seven days and seven nights I lay there, unable to move. But, O my lord, it is not given to us twice to behold beauty such as hers.’

‘It is a lie,’ said the prince. ‘An ogre dwells there. Is it likely that he keeps a maiden in his upper chamber?’

‘Why not?’ replied the ox. ‘But if you come here at dawn tomorrow, and hide behind that tree, you will see for yourself.’

‘So I will,’ said the prince; ‘and if I find that you have not spoken truth, I will kill you.’

The prince left the garden, and the ox went on with his work. Next morning the prince came early to



the garden, and found the ox busy with the water-wheel.

‘Has the girl appeared yet?’ he asked.

‘Not yet; but she will not be long. Hide yourself in the branches of that tree, and you will soon see her.’

The prince did as he was told, and scarcely was he seated when the maiden threw open the lattice.

‘Good morning, O daughter of Buk Ettemsuch!’ said the ox. ‘Your father is feeding you up till you are nice and fat, and then he will put you on a spit and cook you.’

‘My father is feeding me up till I am nice and fat, but he does not mean to eat me. If I had one of your eyes I would use it for a mirror, and look at myself before and behind; and your girths should be loosened, and you should be blind — seven days and seven nights. And hardly had she spoken when the ox fell on the ground, and the maiden shut the lattice and went away. But the prince knew that what the ox had said was true, and that she had not her equal in the whole world. And he came down from the tree, his heart burning with love.

‘Why has the ogre not eaten her?’ thought he. ‘This night I will invite him to supper in my palace and question him about the maiden, and find out if she is his wife.’

So the prince ordered a great ox to be slain and roasted whole, and two huge tanks to be made, one filled with water and the other with wine. And towards evening he called his attendants and went to the ogre’s house to wait in the courtyard till he came back from hunting. The ogre was surprised to see so many people assembled in front of his house; but he bowed politely and said, ‘Good morning, dear neighbours! To what do I owe the pleasure of this visit? I have not offended you, I hope?’

‘Oh, certainly not!’ answered the prince.

‘Then,’ continued the ogre, ‘what has brought you to my house to-day for the first time?’

‘We should like to have supper with you,’ said the prince.

‘Well, supper is ready, and you are welcome,’ replied the ogre, leading the way into the house, for he had had a good day, and there was plenty of game in the bag over his shoulder.

A table was quickly prepared, and the prince had already taken his place, when he suddenly exclaimed, ‘After all, *Buk Ettemsuch*, suppose you come to supper with me?’

‘Where?’ asked the ogre.

‘In my house. I know it is all ready.’

‘But it is so far off — why not stay here?’

‘Oh, I will come another day; but this evening I must be your host.’

So the ogre accompanied the prince and his attendants back to the palace. After a while the prince turned to the ogre and said:

‘It is as a woer that I appear before you. I seek a wife from an honourable family.’

‘But I have no daughter,’ replied the ogre.

‘Oh, yes you have, I saw her at the window.’

‘Well, you can marry her if you wish,’ said he.

So the prince’s heart was glad as he and his attendants rode back with the ogre to his house. And as they parted, the prince said to his guest, ‘You will not forget the bargain we have made?’

‘I am not a young man, and never break my promises,’ said the ogre, and went in and shut the door.

Upstairs he found the maiden, waiting till he returned to have her supper, for she did not like eating by herself.

‘I have had my supper,’ said the ogre, ‘for I have been spending the evening with the prince.’

‘Where did you meet him?’ asked the girl.

‘Oh, we are neighbours, and grew up together, and to-night I promised that you should be his wife.’

‘I don’t want to be any man’s wife,’ answered she;

but this was only pretence, for her heart too was glad.

Next morning early came the prince, bringing with him bridal gifts, and splendid wedding garments, to carry the maiden back to his palace.

But before he let her go the ogre called her to him, and said, ‘Be careful, girl, never to speak to the prince; and when he speaks to you, you must be dumb, unless he swears “by the head of Buk Ettemsuch.” Then you may speak.’

‘Very well,’ answered the girl.

They set out; and when they reached the palace, the prince led his bride to the room he had prepared for her, and said ‘Speak to me, my wife,’ but she was silent; and by-and-by he left her, thinking that perhaps she was shy. The next day the same thing happened, and the next.

At last he said, ‘Well, if you won’t speak, I shall go and get another wife who will.’ And he did.

Now when the new wife was brought to the palace the daughter of Buk Ettemsuch rose, and spoke to the ladies who had come to attend on the second bride. ‘Go and sit down. I will make ready the feast.’ And the ladies sat down as they were told, and waited.

The maiden sat down too, and called out, ‘Come here, firewood,’ and the firewood came. ‘Come here, fire,’ and the fire came and kindled the wood. ‘Come here, pot.’ ‘Come here, oil;’ and the pot and the oil came. ‘Get into the pot, oil!’ said she, and the oil did it. When the oil was boiling, the maiden dipped all her fingers in it, and they became ten fried fishes. ‘Come here, oven,’ she cried next, and the oven came. ‘Fire, heat the oven.’ And the fire heated it. When it was hot enough, the maiden jumped in, just as she was, with her beautiful silver and gold dress, and all her jewels. In a minute or two she had turned into a snow-white loaf, that made your mouth water.

Said the loaf to the ladies, ‘You can eat now; do not

stand so far off ;' but they only stared at each other, speechless with surprise.

‘ What are you staring at ? ’ asked the new bride.

‘ At all these wonders , ’ replied the ladies.

‘ Do you call *these* wonders ? ’ said she scornfully ; ‘ I can do that too , ’ and she jumped straight into the oven, and was burnt up in a moment.

Then they ran to the prince and said : ‘ Come quickly, your wife is dead ! ’

‘ Bury her, then ! ’ returned he. ‘ But why did she do it ? I am sure I said nothing to make her throw herself into the oven . ’

Accordingly the burnt woman was buried, but the prince would not go to the funeral as all his thoughts were still with the wife who would not speak to him. The next night he said to her, ‘ Dear wife, are you afraid that something dreadful will happen if you speak to me ? If you still persist in being dumb, I shall be forced to get another wife . ’ The poor girl longed to speak, but dread of the ogre kept her silent, and the prince did as he had said, and brought a fresh bride into the palace. And when she and her ladies were seated in state, the maiden planted a sharp stake in the ground, and sat herself down comfortably on it, and began to spin.

‘ What are you staring at so ? ’ said the new bride to her ladies. ‘ Do you think that is anything wonderful ? Why, I can do as much myself ! ’

‘ I am sure you can’t , ’ said they, much too surprised to be polite.

Then the maid sprang off the stake and left the room, and instantly the new wife took her place. But the sharp stake ran through, and she was dead in a moment. So they sent to the prince and said, ‘ Come quickly, and bury your wife . ’

‘ Bury her yourselves , ’ he answered. ‘ What did she do it for ? It was not by my orders that she impaled herself on the stake . ’

So they buried her; and in the evening the prince came to the daughter of Buk Ettemsuch, and said to her, 'Speak to me, or I shall have to take another wife.' But she was afraid to speak to him.

The following day the prince hid himself in the room and watched. And soon the maiden woke, and said to the pitcher and to the water-jug, 'Quiek! go down to the spring and bring me some water; I am thirsty.'

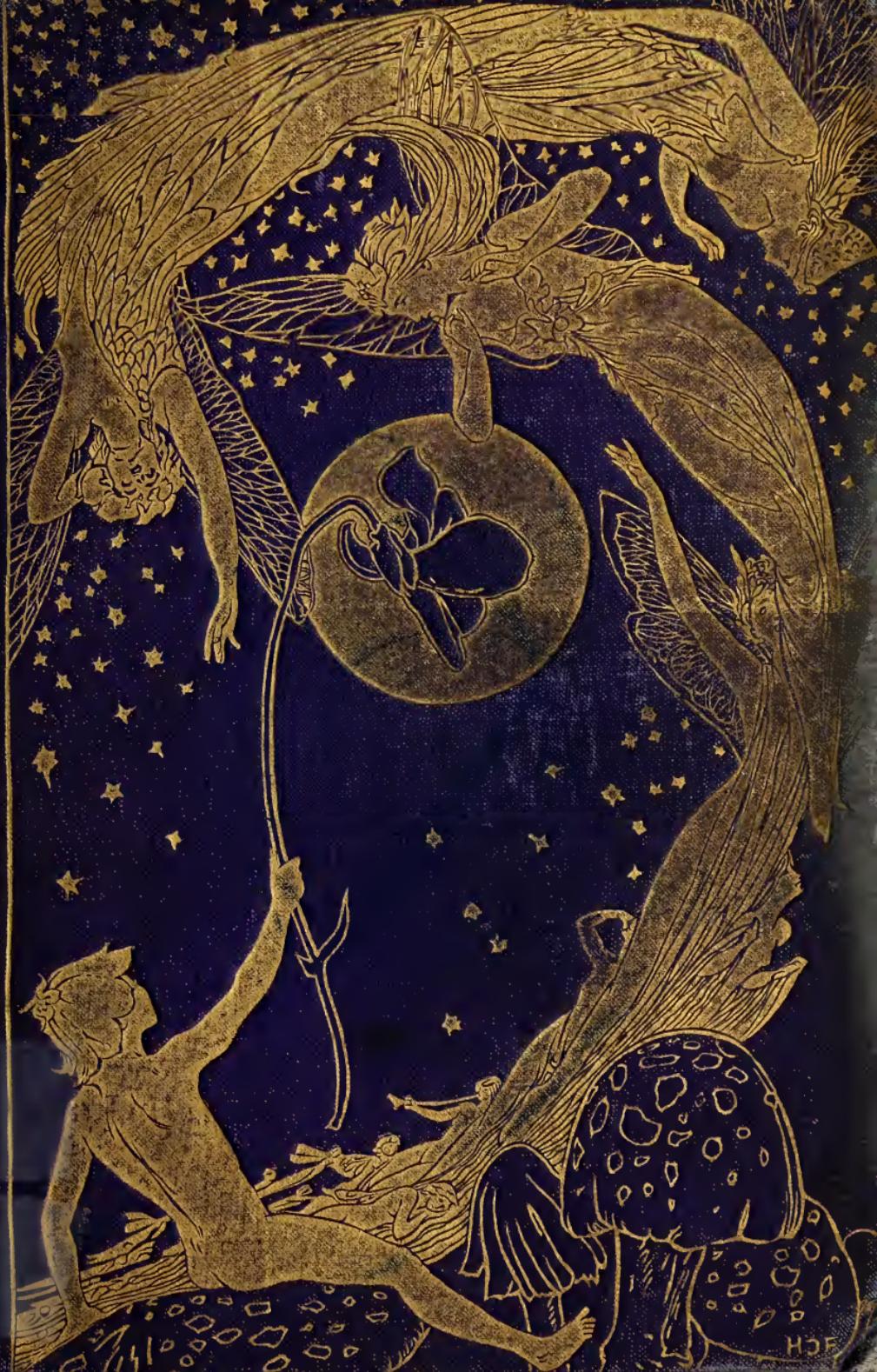
And they went. But as they were filling themselves at the spring, the water-jug knocked against the pitcher and broke off its spout. And the pitcher burst into tears, and ran to the maiden, and said: 'Mistress, beat the water-jug, for he has broken my spout!'

'By the head of Buk Ettemsuch, I implore you not to beat me!'

'Ah,' she replied, 'if only my husband had sworn by that oath, I could have spoken to him from the beginning, and he need never have taken another wife. But now he will never say it, and he will have to go on marrying fresh ones.'

And the prince, from his hiding-place, heard her words, and he jumped up and ran to her and said, 'By the head of Buk Ettemsuch, speak to me.'

So she spoke to him, and they lived happily to the end of their days, because the girl kept the promise she had made to the ogre.



HCF

THE
VIOLET FAIRY BOOK

EDITED BY
ANDREW LANG



WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. J. FORD

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THE STORY OF A GAZELLE

ONCE upon a time there lived a man who wasted all his money, and grew so poor that his only food was a few grains of corn, which he scratched like a fowl from out of a dust heap.

One day he was scratching as usual among a dust-heap in the street, hoping to find something for breakfast, when his eye fell upon a small silver coin, called an eighth, which he greedily snatched up. ‘Now I can have a proper meal,’ he thought, and after drinking some water at a well he lay down and slept so long that it was sunrise before he woke again. Then he jumped up and returned to the dust-heap. ‘For who knows,’ he said to himself, ‘whether I may not have some good luck again.’

As he was walking down the road, he saw a man coming toward him, carrying a cage made of twigs. ‘Hi! you fellow!’ called he, ‘what have you got inside there?’

‘Gazelles,’ replied the man.

‘Bring them here, for I should like to see them.’

As he spoke, some men who were standing by began to laugh, saying to the man with the cage: ‘You had better take care how you bargain with him, for he has nothing at all except what he picks up from a dust-heap, and if he can’t feed himself, will he be able to feed a gazelle?’

But the man with a cage made answer: ‘Since I started from my home in the country, fifty people at the least have called me to show them my gazelles, and was

there one among them who cared to buy? It is the custom for a trader in merchandise to be summoned hither and thither, and who knows where one may find a buyer?' And he took up his cage and went towards the scratcher of dust-heaps, and the men went with him.

'What do you ask for your gazelles?' said the beggar.
'Will you let me have one for an eighth?'

And the man with a cage took out a gazelle, and held it out, saying, 'Take this one, master!'

And the beggar took it and carried it to the dust-heap, where he scratched carefully till he found a few grains of corn, which he divided with his gazelle. This he did night and morning, till five days went by.

Then, as he slept, the gazelle woke him, saying, 'Master.'

And the man answered, 'How is it that I see a wonder?'

'What wonder?' asked the gazelle.

'Why, that you, a gazelle, should be able to speak, for, from the beginning, my father and mother and all the people that are in the world have never told me of a talking gazelle.'

'Never mind that,' said the gazelle, 'but listen to what I say! First, I took you for my master. Second, you gave for me all you had in the world. I cannot run away from you, but give me, I pray you, leave to go every morning and seek food for myself, and every evening I will come back to you. What you find in the dust-heaps is not enough for both of us.'

'Go, then,' answered the master; and the gazelle went.

When the sun had set, the gazelle came back, and the poor man was very glad, and they laid down and slept side by side.

In the morning it said to him, 'I am going away to feed.'

And the man replied, 'Go, my son,' but he felt very

lonely without his gazelle, and set out sooner than usual for the dust-heap where he generally found most corn. And glad he was when the evening came, and he could return home. He lay on the grass chewing tobacco, when the gazelle trotted up.

‘Good evening, my master; how have you fared all day? I have been resting in the shade in a place where there is sweet grass when I am hungry, and fresh water when I am thirsty, and a soft breeze to fan me in the heat. It is far away in the forest, and no one knows of it but me, and to-morrow I shall go again.’

So for five days the gazelle set off at daybreak for this cool spot, but on the fifth day it came to a place where the grass was bitter, and it did not like it, and scratched, hoping to tear away the bad blades. But, instead, it saw something lying in the earth, which turned out to be a diamond, very large and bright. ‘Oh, ho!’ said the gazelle to itself, ‘perhaps now I can do something for my master who bought me with all the money he had; but I must be careful or they will say he has stolen it. I had better take it myself to some great rich man, and see what it will do for me.’

Directly the gazelle had come to this conclusion, it picked up the diamond in its mouth, and went on and on and on through the forest, but found no place where a rich man was likely to dwell. For two more days it ran, from dawn to dark, till at last early one morning it caught sight of a large town, which gave it fresh courage.

The people were standing about the streets doing their marketing, when the gazelle bounded past, the diamond flashing as it ran. They called after it, but it took no notice till it reached the palace, where the sultan was sitting, enjoying the cool air. And the gazelle galloped up to him, and laid the diamond at his feet.

The sultan looked first at the diamond and next at the gazelle; then he ordered his attendants to bring cushions and a carpet, that the gazelle might rest itself after its

long journey. And he likewise ordered milk to be brought, and rice, that it might eat and drink and be refreshed.

And when the gazelle was rested, the sultan said to it: 'Give me the news you have come with.'

And the gazelle answered: 'I am come with this diamond, which is a pledge from my master the Sultan Darai. He has heard you have a daughter, and sends you this small token, and begs you will give her to him to wife.'

And the sultan said: 'I am content. The wife is his wife, the family is his family, the slave is his slave. Let him come to me empty-handed, I am content.'

When the sultan had ended, the gazelle rose, and said: 'Master, farewell; I go back to our town, and in eight days, or it may be in eleven days, we shall arrive as your guests.'

And the sultan answered; 'So let it be.'

All this time the poor man far away had been mourning and weeping for his gazelle, which he thought had run away from him for ever. And when it came in at the door he rushed to embrace it with such joy that he would not allow it a chance to speak.

'Be still, master, and don't cry,' said the gazelle at last; 'let us sleep now, and in the morning, when I go, follow me.'

With the first ray of dawn they got up and went into the forest, and on the fifth day, as they were resting near a stream, the gazelle gave its master a sound beating, and then bade him stay where he was till it returned. And the gazelle ran off, and about ten o'clock it came near the sultan's palace, where the road was all lined with soldiers who were there to do honour to Sultan Darai. And directly they caught sight of the gazelle in the distance one of the soldiers ran on and said, 'Sultan Darai is coming: I have seen the gazelle.'

Then the sultan rose up, and called his whole court to follow him, and went out to meet the gazelle, who, bound-



THE GAZELLE BRINGS THE DIAMOND TO THE SULTAN

ing up to him, gave him greeting. The sultan answered politely, and inquired where it had left its master, whom it had promised to bring back.

‘Alas!’ replied the gazelle, ‘he is lying in the forest, for on our way here we were met by robbers, who, after beating and robbing him, took away all his clothes. And he is now hiding under a bush, lest a passing stranger might see him.’

The sultan, on hearing what had happened to his future son-in-law, turned his horse and rode to the palace, and bade a groom to harness the best horse in the stable and order a woman slave to bring a bag of clothes, such as a man might want, out of the chest; and he chose out a tunic and a turban and a sash for the waist, and fetched himself a gold-hilted sword, and a dagger and a pair of sandals, and a stick of sweet-smelling wood.

‘Now,’ said he to the gazelle, ‘take these things with the soldiers to the sultan, that he may be able to come.’

And the gazelle answered: ‘Can I take those soldiers to go and put my master to shame as he lies there naked? I am enough by myself, my lord.’

‘How will you be enough,’ asked the sultan, ‘to manage this horse and all these clothes?’

‘Oh, that is easily done,’ replied the gazelle. ‘Fasten the horse to my neck and tie the clothes to the back of the horse, and be sure they are fixed firmly, as I shall go faster than he does.’

Everything was carried out as the gazelle had ordered, and when all was ready it said to the sultan: ‘Farewell, my lord, I am going.’

‘Farewell, gazelle,’ answered the sultan; ‘when shall we see you again?’

‘To-morrow about five,’ replied the gazelle, and, giving a tug to the horse’s rein, they set off at a gallop.

The sultan watched them till they were out of sight:

then he said to his attendants, 'That gazelle comes from gentle hands, from the house of a sultan, and that is what makes it so different from other gazelles.' And in the eyes of the sultan the gazelle became a person of consequence.

Meanwhile the gazelle ran on till it came to the place where its master was seated, and his heart laughed when he saw the gazelle.

And the gazelle said to him, 'Get up, my master, and bathe in the stream!' and when the man had bathed it said again, 'Now rub yourself well with earth, and rub your teeth well with sand to make them bright and shining.' And when this was done it said, 'The sun has gone down behind the hills; it is time for us to go': so it went and brought the clothes from the back of the horse, and the man put them on and was well pleased.

'Master!' said the gazelle when the man was ready, 'be sure that where we are going you keep silence, except for giving greetings and asking for news. Leave all the talking to me. I have provided you with a wife, and have made her presents of clothes and turbans and rare and precious things, so it is needless for you to speak.'

'Very good, I will be silent,' replied the man as he mounted the horse. 'You have given all this; it is you who are the master, and I who am the slave, and I will obey you in all things.'

'So they went their way, and they went and went till the gazelle saw in the distance the palace of the sultan. Then it said, 'Master, that is the house we are going to, and you are not a poor man any longer: even your name is new.'

'What is my name, eh, my father?' asked the man.

'Sultan Darai,' said the gazelle.

Very soon some soldiers came to meet them, while others ran off to tell the sultan of their approach.

And the sultan set off at once, and the viziers and the emirs, and the judges, and the rich men of the city, all followed him.



THE GAZELLE BRINGS CLOTHES TO HIS MASTER

Directly the gazelle saw them coming, it said to its master: 'Your father-in-law is coming to meet you; that is he in the middle, wearing a mantle of sky-blue. Get off your horse and go to greet him.'

And Sultan Darai leapt from his horse, and so did the other sultan, and they gave their hands to one another, and kissed each other, and went together into the palace.

The next morning the gazelle went to the rooms of the sultan, and said to him: 'My lord, we want you to marry us our wife, for the soul of Sultan Darai is eager.'

'The wife is ready, so call the priest,' answered he, and when the ceremony was over a cannon was fired and music was played, and within the palace there was feasting.

'Master,' said the gazelle the following morning, 'I am setting out on a journey, and I shall not be back for seven days, and perhaps not then. But be careful not to leave the house till I come.'

And the master answered, 'I will not leave the house.'

And it went to the sultan of the country and said to him: 'My lord, Sultan Darai has sent me to his town to get the house in order. It will take me seven days, and if I am not back in seven days he will not leave the palace till I return.'

'Very good,' said the sultan.

And it went and it went through the forest and wilderness, till it arrived at a town full of fine houses. At the end of the chief road was a great house, beautiful exceedingly, built of sapphire and turquoise and marbles. 'That,' thought the gazelle, 'is the house for my master, and I will call up my courage and go and look at the people who are in it, if any people there are. For in this town have I as yet seen no people. If I die, I die, and if I live, I live. Here can I think of no plan, so if anything is to kill me, it will kill me.'

Then it knocked twice at the door, and cried 'Open,' but no one answered. And it cried again, and a voice replied:

‘Who are you that are crying “Open”?’

And the gazelle said, ‘It is I, great mistress, your grandchild.’

‘If you are my grandchild,’ returned the voice, ‘go back whence you came. Don’t come and die here, and bring me to my death as well.’

‘Open, mistress, I entreat, I have something to say to you.’

‘Grandchild,’ replied she, ‘I fear to put your life in danger, and my own too.’

‘Oh, mistress, my life will not be lost, nor yours either; open, I pray you.’ So she opened the door.

‘What is the news where you come from, my grandson?’ asked she.

‘Great lady, where I come from it is well, and with you it is well.’

‘Ah, my son, here it is not well at all. If you seek a way to die, or if you have not yet seen death, then is to-day the day for you to know what dying is.’

‘If I am to know it, I shall know it,’ replied the gazelle; ‘but tell me, who is the lord of this house?’

And she said, ‘Ah, father! in this house is much wealth, and much people, and much food, and many horses. And the lord of it all is an exceeding great and wonderful snake.’

‘Oh!’ cried the gazelle when he heard this; ‘tell me how I can get at the snake to kill him?’

‘My son,’ returned the old woman, ‘do not say words like these; you risk both our lives. He has put me here all by myself, and I have to cook his food. When the great snake is coming there springs up a wind, and blows the dust about, and this goes on till the great snake glides into the courtyard and calls for his dinner, which must always be ready for him in those big pots. He eats till he has had enough, and then drinks a whole tankful of water. After that he goes away. Every second day he comes, when the sun is over the house. And he has

seven heads. How then can you be a match for him, my son?’

‘Mind your own business, mother,’ answered the gazelle, ‘and don’t mind other people’s! Has this snake a sword?’

‘He has a sword, and a sharp one too. It cuts like a flash of lightning.’

‘Give it to me, mother!’ said the gazelle, and she unhooked the sword from the wall, as she was bidden. ‘You must be quick,’ she said, ‘for he may be here at any moment. Hark! is not that the wind rising? He has come!’

They were silent, but the old woman peeped from behind a curtain, and saw the snake busy at the pots which she had placed ready for him in the courtyard. And after he had done eating and drinking he came to the door.

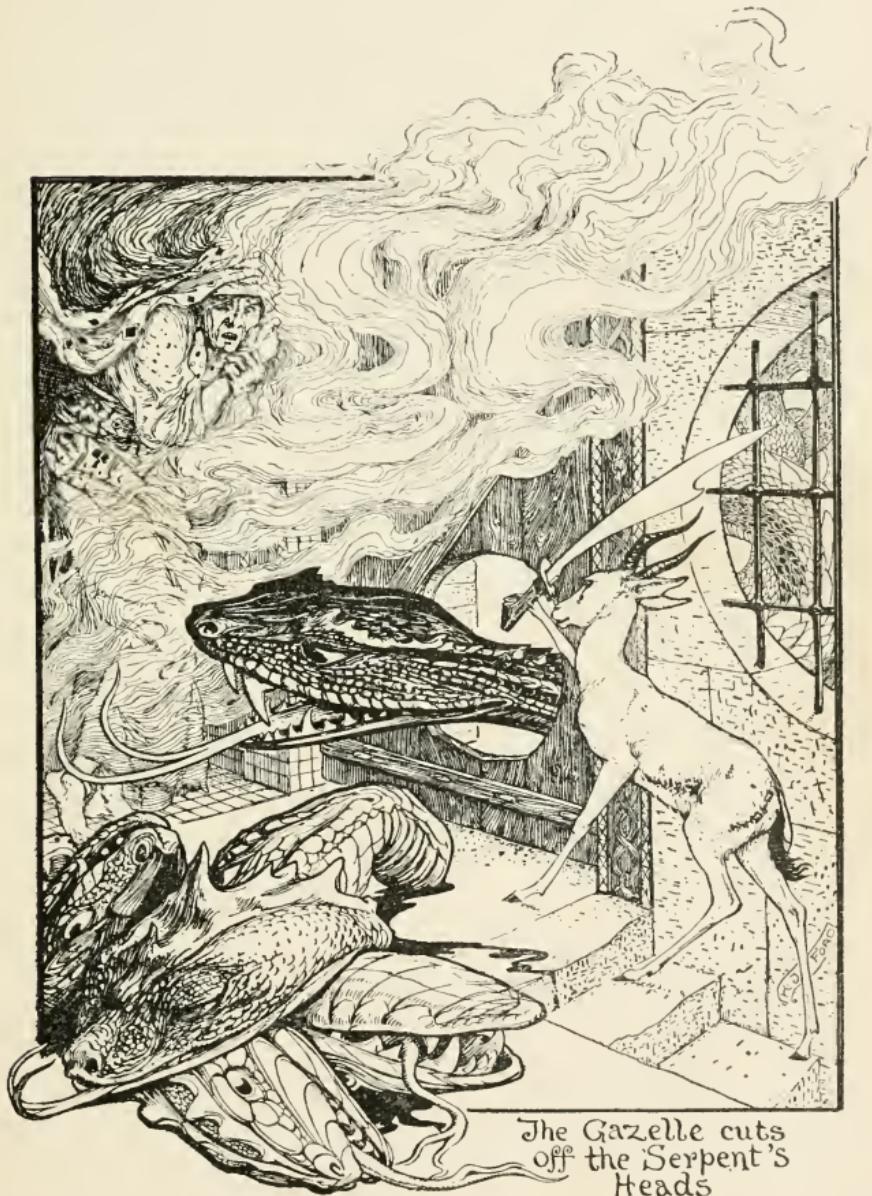
‘You old body!’ he cried; ‘what smell is that I smell inside that is not the smell of every day?’

‘Oh, master!’ answered she, ‘I am alone, as I always am! But to-day, after many days, I have sprinkled fresh scent all over me, and it is that which you smell. What else could it be, master?’

All this time the gazelle had been standing close to the door, holding the sword in one of its front paws. And as the snake put one of his heads through the hole that he had made so as to get in and out comfortably, it cut it off so clean that the snake really did not feel it. The second blow was not quite so straight, for the snake said to himself, ‘Who is that who is trying to scratch me?’ and stretched out his third head to see; but no sooner was the neck through the hole than the head went rolling to join the rest.

When six of his heads were gone the snake lashed his tail with such fury that the gazelle and the old woman could not see each other for the dust he made. And the gazelle said to him, ‘You have climbed all sorts of

trees, but this you can't climb,' and as the seventh head came darting through it went rolling to join the rest.



The Gazelle cuts
off the Serpent's
Heads

Then the sword fell rattling on the ground, for the gazelle had fainted.

The old woman shrieked with delight when she saw her enemy was dead, and ran to bring water to the gazelle, and fanned it, and put it where the wind could blow on it, till it grew better and gave a sneeze. And the heart of the old woman was glad, and she gave it more water, till by-and-by the gazelle got up.

‘Show me this house,’ it said, ‘from beginning to end, from top to bottom, from inside to out.’

So she arose and showed the gazelle rooms full of gold and precious things, and other rooms full of slaves. ‘They are all yours, goods and slaves,’ said she.

But the gazelle answered, ‘You must keep them safe till I call my master.’

For two days it lay and rested in the house, and fed on milk and rice, and on the third day it bade the old woman farewell and started back to its master.

And when he heard that the gazelle was at the door he felt like a man who has found the time when all prayers are granted, and he rose and kissed it, saying: ‘My father, you have been a long time; you have left sorrow with me. I cannot eat, I cannot drink, I cannot laugh; my heart felt no smile at anything, because of thinking of you.’

And the gazelle answered: ‘I am well, and where I come from it is well, and I wish that after four days you would take your wife and go home.’

And he said: ‘It is for you to speak. Where you go, I will follow.’

‘Then I shall go to your father-in-law and tell him this news.’

‘Go, my son.’

So the gazelle went to the father-in-law and said: ‘I am sent by my master to come and tell you that after four days he will go away with his wife to his own home.’

‘Must he really go so quickly? We have not yet sat much together, I and Sultan Darai, nor have we yet

talked much together, nor have we yet ridden out together, nor have we eaten together; yet it is fourteen days since he came.'

But the gazelle replied: 'My lord, you cannot help it, for he wishes to go home, and nothing will stop him.'

'Very good,' said the sultan, and he called all the people who were in the town, and commanded that the day his daughter left the palace ladies and guards were to attend her on her way.

And at the end of four days a great company of ladies and slaves and horses went forth to escort the wife of Sultan Darai to her new home. They rode all day, and when the sun sank behind the hills they rested, and ate of the food the gazelle gave them, and lay down to sleep. And they journeyed on for many days, and they all, nobles and slaves, loved the gazelle with a great love—more than they loved the Sultan Darai.

At last one day signs of houses appeared, far, far off. And those who saw cried out, 'Gazelle!'

And it answered, 'Ah, my mistresses, that is the house of Sultan Darai.'

At this news the women rejoiced much, and the slaves rejoiced much, and in the space of two hours they came to the gates, and the gazelle bade them all stay behind, and it went on to the house with Sultan Darai.

When the old woman saw them coming through the courtyard she jumped and shouted for joy, and as the gazelle drew near she seized it in her arms, and kissed it. The gazelle did not like this, and said to her: 'Old woman, leave me alone; the one to be carried is my master, and the one to be kissed is my master.'

And she answered, 'Forgive me, my son. I did not know this was our master,' and she threw open all the doors so that the master might see everything that the rooms and storehouses contained. Sultan Darai looked about him, and at length he said:

'Unfasten those horses that are tied up, and let loose

those people that are bound. And let some sweep, and some spread the beds, and some cook, and some draw water, and some come out and receive the mistress.'

And when the sultana and her ladies and her slaves entered the house, and saw the rich stuffs it was hung with, and the beautiful rice that was prepared for them to eat, they cried: 'Ah, you gazelle, we have seen great houses, we have seen people, we have heard of things. But this house, and you, such as you are, we have never seen or heard of.'

After a few days, the ladies said they wished to go home again. The gazelle begged them hard to stay, but finding they would not, it brought many gifts, and gave some to the ladies and some to their slaves. And they all thought the gazelle greater a thousand times than its master, Sultan Darai.

The gazelle and its master remained in the house many weeks, and one day it said to the old woman, 'I came with my master to this place, and I have done many things for my master, good things, and till to-day he has never asked me: "Well, my gazelle, how did you get this house? Who is the owner of it? And this town, were there no people in it?" All good things I have done for the master, and he has not one day done me any good thing. But people say, "If you want to do any one good, don't do him good only, do him evil also, and there will be peace between you." So, mother, I have done: I want to see the favours I have done to my master, that he may do me the like.'

'Good,' replied the old woman, and they went to bed.

In the morning, when light came, the gazelle was sick in its stomach and feverish, and its legs ached. And it said 'Mother!'

And she answered, 'Here, my son?'

And it said, 'Go and tell my master upstairs the gazelle is very ill.'

‘Very good, my son; and if he should ask me what is the matter, what am I to say?’

‘Tell him all my body aches badly; I have no single part without pain.’

The old woman went upstairs, and she found the mistress and master sitting on a couch of marble spread with soft cushions, and they asked her, ‘Well, old woman, what do you want?’

‘To tell the master the gazelle is ill,’ said she.

‘What is the matter?’ asked the wife.

‘All its body pains; there is no part without pain.’

‘Well, what can I do? Make some gruel of red millet, and give to it.’

But his wife stared and said: ‘Oh, master, do you tell her to make the gazelle gruel out of red millet, which a horse would not eat? Eh, master, that is not well.’

But he answered, ‘Oh, you are mad! Rice is only kept for people.’

‘Eh, master, this is not like a gazelle. It is the apple of your eye. If sand got into that, it would trouble you.’

‘My wife, your tongue is long,’ and he left the room.

The old woman saw she had spoken vainly, and went back weeping to the gazelle. And when the gazelle saw her it said, ‘Mother, what is it, and why do you cry? If it be good, give me the answer; and if it be bad, give me the answer.’

But still the old woman would not speak, and the gazelle prayed her to let it know the words of the master. At last she said: ‘I went upstairs and found the mistress and the master sitting on a couch, and he asked me what I wanted, and I told him that you, his slave, were ill. And his wife asked what was the matter, and I told her that there was not a part of your body without pain. And the master told me to take some red millet and make you gruel, but the mistress said, “Eh, master, the gazelle is the apple of your eye; you have no child, this

gazelle is like your child; so this gazelle is not one to be done evil to. This is a gazelle in form, but not a gazelle in heart; he is in all things better than a gentleman, be he who he may."

"And he answered her, "Silly chattering, your words are many. I know its price; I bought it for an eighth. What loss will it be to me?"

The gazelle kept silence for a few moments. Then it said, 'The elders said, "One that does good like a mother," and I have done him good, and I have got this that the elders said. But go up again to the master, and tell him the gazelle is very ill, and it has not drunk the gruel of red millet.'

So the old woman returned, and found the master and the mistress drinking coffee. And when he heard what the gazelle had said, he cried: 'Hold your peace, old woman, and stay your feet and close your eyes, and stop your ears with wax; and if the gazelle bids you come to me, say your legs are bent, and you cannot walk; and if it begs you to listen, say your ears are stopped with wax; and if it wishes to talk, reply that your tongue has got a hook in it.'

The heart of the old woman wept as she heard such words, because she saw that when the gazelle first came to that town it was ready to sell its life to buy wealth for its master. Then it happened to get both life and wealth, but now it had no honour with its master.

And tears sprung likewise to the eyes of the sultan's wife, and she said, 'I am sorry for you, my husband, that you should deal so wickedly with that gazelle'; but he only answered, 'Old woman, pay no heed to the talk of the mistress: tell it to perish out of the way. I cannot sleep, I cannot eat, I cannot drink, for the worry of that gazelle. Shall a creature that I bought for an eighth trouble me from morning till night? Not so, old woman!'

The old woman went downstairs, and there lay the

gazelle, blood flowing from its nostrils. And she took it in her arms and said, 'My son, the good you did is lost; there remains only patience.'

And it said, 'Mother, I shall die, for my soul is full of anger and bitterness. My face is ashamed, that I should have done good to my master, and that he should repay me with evil.' It paused for a moment, and then went on, 'Mother, of the goods that are in this house, what do I eat? I might have every day half a basinful, and would my master be any the poorer? But did not the elders say, "He that does good like a mother!"'

And it said, 'Go and tell my master that the gazelle is nearer death than life.'

So she went, and spoke as the gazelle had bidden her; but he answered, 'I have told you to trouble me no more.'

But his wife's heart was sore, and she said to him: 'Ah, master, what has the gazelle done to you? How has he failed you? The things you do to him are not good, and you will draw on yourself the hatred of the people. For this gazelle is loved by all, by small and great, by women and men. Ah, my husband! I thought you had great wisdom, and you have not even a little!'

But he answered, 'You are mad, my wife.'

The old woman stayed no longer, and went back to the gazelle, followed secretly by the mistress, who called a maid-servant and bade her take some milk and rice and cook it for the gazelle.

'Take also this cloth,' she said, 'to cover it with, and this pillow for its head. And if the gazelle wants more, let it ask me, and not its master. And if it will, I will send it in a litter to my father, and he will nurse it till it is well.'

And the maid-servant did as her mistress bade her, and said what her mistress had told her to say, but the gazelle made no answer, but turned over on its side and died quietly.

When the news spread abroad, there was much weeping among the people, and Sultan Darai arose in wrath, and cried, ' You weep for that gazelle as if you wept for me ! And, after all, what is it but a gazelle, that I bought for an eighth ? '

But his wife answered, ' Master, we looked upon that gazelle as we looked upon you. It was the gazelle who came to ask me of my father, it was the gazelle who brought me from my father, and I was given in charge to the gazelle by my father. '

And when the people heard her they lifted up their voices and spoke :

' We never saw you, we saw the gazelle. It was the gazelle who met with trouble here, it was the gazelle who met with rest here. So, then, when such an one departs from this world we weep for ourselves, we do not weep for the gazelle. '

And they said furthermore :

' The gazelle did you much good, and if anyone says he could have done more for you he is a liar ! Therefore, to us who have done you no good, what treatment will you give ? The gazelle has died from bitterness of soul, and you ordered your slaves to throw it into the well. Ah ! leave us alone that we may weep. '

But Sultan Darai would not heed their words, and the dead gazelle was thrown into the well.

When the mistress heard of it, she sent three slaves, mounted on donkeys, with a letter to her father the sultan, and when the sultan had read the letter he bowed his head and wept, like a man who had lost his mother. And he commanded horses to be saddled, and called the governor and the judges and all the rich men, and said :

' Come now with me ; let us go and bury it. '

Night and day they travelled, till the sultan came to the well where the gazelle had been thrown. And it was a large well, built round a rock, with room for many people ;

The END



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W.H. FORD

THE GAZELLE

and the sultan entered, and the judges and the rich men followed him. And when he saw the gazelle lying there he wept afresh, and took it in his arms and carried it away.

When the three slaves went and told their mistress what the sultan had done, and how all the people were weeping, she answered :

‘I too have eaten no food, neither have I drunk water, since the day the gazelle died. I have not spoken, and I have not laughed.’

The sultan took the gazelle and buried it, and ordered the people to wear mourning for it, so there was great mourning throughout the city.

Now after the days of mourning were at an end, the wife was sleeping at her husband’s side, and in her sleep she dreamed that she was once more in her father’s house, and when she woke up it was no dream.

And the man dreamed that he was on the dust-heap, scratching. And when he woke, behold ! that also was no dream, but the truth.

[Swahili Tales.]

THE NUNDA, EATER OF PEOPLE

ONCE upon a time there lived a sultan who loved his garden dearly, and planted it with trees and flowers and fruits from all parts of the world. He went to see them three times every day: first at seven o'clock, when he got up, then at three, and lastly at half-past five. There was no plant and no vegetable which escaped his eye, but he lingered longest of all before his one date tree.

Now the sultan had seven sons. Six of them he was proud of, for they were strong and manly, but the youngest he disliked, for he spent all his time among the women of the house. The sultan had talked to him, and he paid no heed; and he had beaten him, and he paid no heed; and he had tied him up, and he paid no heed, till at last his father grew tired of trying to make him change his ways, and let him alone.

Time passed, and one day the sultan, to his great joy, saw signs of fruit on his date tree. And he told his vizir, 'My date tree is bearing;' and he told the officers, 'My date tree is bearing;' and he told the judges, 'My date tree is bearing;' and he told all the rich men of the town.

He waited patiently for some days till the dates were nearly ripe, and then he called his six sons, and said: 'One of you must watch the date tree till the dates are ripe, for if it is not watched the slaves will steal them, and I shall not have any for another year.'

And the eldest son answered, 'I will go, father,' and he went.

The first thing the youth did was to summon his slaves, and bid them beat drums all night under the date tree, for he feared to fall asleep. So the slaves beat the drums, and the young man danced till four o'clock, and then it grew so cold he could dance no longer, and one of the slaves said to him: 'It is getting light; the tree is safe; lie down, master, and go to sleep.'

So he lay down and slept, and his slaves slept likewise.

A few minutes went by, and a bird flew down from a neighbouring thicket, and ate all the dates, without leaving a single one. And when the tree was stripped bare, the bird went as it had come. Soon after, one of the slaves woke up and looked for the dates, but there were no dates to see. Then he ran to the young man and shook him, saying:

'Your father set you to watch the tree, and you have not watched, and the dates have all been eaten by a bird.'

The lad jumped up and ran to the tree to see for himself, but there was not a date anywhere. And he cried aloud, 'What am I to say to my father? Shall I tell him that the dates have been stolen, or that a great rain fell and a great storm blew? But he will send me to gather them up and bring them to him, and there are none to bring! Shall I tell him that Bedouins drove me away, and when I returned there were no dates? And he will answer, "You had slaves, did they not fight with the Bedouins?" It is the truth that will be best, and that will I tell him.'

Then he went straight to his father, and found him sitting in his verandah with his five sons round him; and the lad bowed his head.

'Give me the news from the garden,' said the sultan.

And the youth answered, 'The dates have all been eaten by some bird: there is not one left.'

The sultan was silent for a moment: then he asked, 'Where were you when the bird came?'

The lad answered: 'I watched the date tree till the cocks were crowing and it was getting light; then I lay down for a little, and I slept. When I woke a slave was standing over me, and he said, "There is not one date left on the tree!"' And I went to the date tree, and saw it was true; and that is what I have to tell you.'

And the sultan replied, 'A son like you is only good for eating and sleeping. I have no use for you. Go your way, and when my date tree bears again, I will send another son; perhaps he will watch better.'

So he waited many months, till the tree was covered with more dates than any tree had ever borne before. When they were near ripening he sent one of his sons to the garden: saying, 'My son, I am longing to taste those dates: go and watch over them, for to-day's sun will bring them to perfection.'

And the lad answered: 'My father, I am going now, and to-morrow, when the sun has passed the hour of seven, bid a slave come and gather the dates.'

'Good,' said the sultan.

The youth went to the tree, and lay down and slept. And about midnight he arose to look at the tree, and the dates were all there — beautiful dates, swinging in bunches.

'Ah, my father will have a feast, indeed,' thought he. 'What a fool my brother was not to take more heed! Now he is in disgrace, and we know him no more. Well, I will watch till the bird comes. I should like to see what manner of bird it is.'

And he sat and read till the cocks crew and it grew light, and the dates were still on the tree.

'Oh my father will have his dates; they are all safe now,' he thought to himself. 'I will make myself comfortable against this tree,' and he leaned against the

trunk, and sleep came on him, and the bird flew down and ate all the dates.

When the sun rose, the head-man came and looked for the dates, and there where no dates. And he woke the young man, and said to him, 'Look at the tree.'

And the young man looked, and there were no dates. And his ears were stopped, and his legs trembled, and his tongue grew heavy at the thought of the sultan. His slave became frightened as he looked at him, and asked, 'My master, what is it?'

He answered, 'I have no pain anywhere, but I am ill everywhere. My whole body is well, and my whole body is sick. I fear my father, for did I not say to him, "To-morrow at seven you shall taste the dates"? And he will drive me away, as he drove away my brother! I will go away myself, before he sends me.'

Then he got up and took a road that led straight past the palace, but he had not walked many steps before he met a man carrying a large silver dish, covered with a white cloth to cover the dates. And the young man said, 'The dates are not ripe yet; you must return to-morrow.'

And the slave went with him to the palace, where the sultan was sitting with his four sons.

'Good greeting, master!' said the youth.

And the sultan answered, 'Have you seen the man I sent?'

'I have, master; but the dates are not yet ripe.'

But the sultan did not believe his words, and said: 'This second year I have eaten no dates, because of my sons. Go your ways, you are my son no longer!'

And the sultan looked at the four sons that were left him, and promised rich gifts to whichever of them would bring him the dates from the tree. But year by year passed, and he never got them. One son tried to keep himself awake with playing cards; another mounted a horse and rode round and round the tree, while the two

others, whom their father as a last hope sent together, lit bonfires. But whatever they did, the result was always the same. Towards dawn they fell asleep, and the bird ate the dates on the tree.

The sixth year had come, and the dates on the tree were thicker than ever. And the head-man went to the palace and told the sultan what he had seen. But the sultan only shook his head, and said sadly, 'What is that to me? I have had seven sons, yet for five years a bird has devoured my dates; and this year it will be the same as ever.'

Now the youngest son was sitting in the kitchen, as was his custom, when he heard his father say those words. And he rose up, and went to his father, and knelt before him. 'Father, this year you shall eat dates,' cried he. 'And on the tree are five great bunches, and each bunch I will give to a separate nation, for the nations in the town are five. This time, I will watch the date tree myself.' But his father and his mother laughed heartily, and thought his words idle talk.

One day, news was brought to the sultan that the dates were ripe, and he ordered one of his men to go and watch the tree. His son, who happened to be standing by, heard the order, and he said :

'How is it that you have bidden a man to watch the tree, when I, your son, am left?'

And his father answered, 'Ah, six were of no use, and where they failed, will you succeed?'

But the boy replied: 'Have patience to-day, and let me go, and to-morrow you shall see whether I bring you dates or not.'

'Let the child go, Master,' said his wife; 'perhaps we shall eat the dates — or perhaps we shall not — but let him go.'

And the sultan answered: 'I do not refuse to let him go, but my heart distrusts him. His brothers all promised fair, and what did they do?'

But the boy entreated, saying, 'Father, if you and I and mother be alive to-morrow, you shall eat the dates.'

'Go then,' said his father.

When the boy reached the garden, he told the slaves to leave him, and to return home themselves and sleep. When he was alone, he laid himself down and slept fast till one o'clock, when he arose, and sat opposite the date tree. Then he took some Indian corn out of one fold of his dress, and some sandy grit out of another. And he chewed the corn till he felt he was growing sleepy, and then he put some grit into his mouth, and that kept him awake till the bird came.

It looked about at first without seeing him, and whispering to itself, 'There is no one here,' fluttered lightly on to the tree and stretched out his beak for the dates. Then the boy stole softly up, and caught it by the wing.

The bird turned and flew quickly away, but the boy never let go, not even when they soared high into the air.

'Son of Adam,' the bird said when the tops of the mountains looked small below them, 'if you fall, you will be dead long before you reach the ground, so go your way, and let me go mine.'

But the boy answered, 'Wherever you go, I will go with you. You cannot get rid of me.'

'I did not eat your dates,' persisted the bird, 'and the day is dawning. Leave me to go my way.'

But again the boy answered him: 'My six brothers are hateful to my father because you came and stole the dates, and to-day my father shall see you, and my brothers shall see you, and all the people of the town, great and small, shall see you. And my father's heart will rejoice.'

'Well, if you will not leave me, I will throw you off,' said the bird.

So it flew up higher still—so high that the earth shone like one of the other stars.

'How much of you will be left if you fall from here?' asked the bird.



‘If I die, I die,’ said the boy, ‘but I will not leave you.’

And the bird saw it was no use talking, and went down to the earth again.

‘Here you are at home, so let me go my way,’ it begged once more; ‘or at least make a covenant with me.’

‘What covenant?’ said the boy.

‘Save me from the sun,’ replied the bird, ‘and I will save you from rain.’

‘How can you do that, and how can I tell if I can trust you?’

‘Pull a feather from my tail, and put it in the fire, and if you want me I will come to you, wherever I am.’

And the boy answered, ‘Well, I agree; go your way.’

‘Farewell, my friend. When you call me, if it is from the depths of the sea, I will come.’

The lad watched the bird out of sight; then he went straight to the date tree. And when he saw the dates his heart was glad, and his body felt stronger and his eyes brighter than before. And he laughed out loud with joy, and said to himself, ‘This is *my* luck, mine, Sit-in-the-kitchen! Farewell, date tree, I am going to lie down. What ate you will eat you no more.’

The sun was high in the sky before the head-man, whose business it was, came to look at the date tree, expecting to find it stripped of all its fruit, but when he saw the dates so thick that they almost hid the leaves he ran back to his house, and beat a big drum till everybody came running, and even the little children wanted to know what had happened.

‘What is it? What is it, head-man?’ cried they.

‘Ah, it is not a son that the master has, but a lion! This day Sit-in-the-kitchen has uncovered his face before his father!’

‘But how, head-man?’

‘To-day the people may eat the dates.’

‘Is it true, head-man?’

‘Oh yes, it is true, but let him sleep till each man has brought forth a present. He who has fowls, let him take fowls; he who has a goat, let him take a goat; he who has rice, let him take rice.’ And the people did as he had said.

Then they took the drum, and went to the tree where the boy lay sleeping.

And they picked him up, and carried him away, with horns and clarionets and drums, with clappings of hands and shrieks of joy, straight to his father’s house.

When his father heard the noise and saw the baskets made of green leaves, brimming over with dates, and his son borne high on the necks of slaves, his heart leaped, and he said to himself ‘To-day at last I shall eat dates.’ And he called his wife to see what her son had done, and ordered his soldiers to take the boy and bring him to his father.

‘What news, my son?’ said he.

‘News? I have no news, except that if you will open your mouth you shall see what dates taste like.’ And he plucked a date, and put it into his father’s mouth.

‘Ah! You are indeed my son,’ cried the sultan. ‘You do not take after those fools, those good-for-nothings. But, tell me, what did you do with the bird, for it was you, and you only who watched for it?’

‘Yes, it was I who watched for it and who saw it. And it will not come again, neither for its life, nor for your life, nor for the lives of your children.’

‘Oh, once I had six sons, and now I have only one. It is you, whom I called a fool, who have given me the dates: as for the others, I want none of them.’

But his wife rose up and went to him, and said, ‘Master, do not, I pray you, reject them,’ and she entreated long, till the sultan granted her prayer, for she loved the six elder ones more than her last one.

So they all lived quietly at home, till the sultan’s cat went and caught a calf. And the owner of the calf went

and told the sultan, but he answered, 'The cat is mine, and the calf mine,' and the man dared not complain further.

Two days after, the cat caught a cow, and the sultan was told, 'Master, the cat has caught a cow,' but he only said, 'It was my cow and my cat.'

And the cat waited a few days, and then it caught a donkey, and they told the sultan, 'Master, the cat has caught a donkey,' and he said, 'My cat and my donkey.' Next it was a horse, and after that a camel, and when the sultan was told he said, 'You don't like this cat, and want me to kill it. And I shall not kill it. Let it eat the camel: let it even eat a man.'

And it waited till the next day, and caught some one's child. And the sultan was told, 'The cat has caught a child.' And he said, 'The cat is mine and the child mine.' Then it caught a grown-up man.

After that the cat left the town and took up its abode in a thicket near the road. So if any one passed, going for water, it devoured him. If it saw a cow going to feed, it devoured him. If it saw a goat, it devoured him. Whatever went along that road the cat caught and ate.

Then the people went to the sultan in a body, and told him of all the misdeeds of that cat. But he answered as before, 'The cat is mine and the people are mine.' And no man dared kill the cat, which grew bolder and bolder, and at last came into the town to look for its prey.

One day, the sultan said to his six sons, 'I am going into the country, to see how the wheat is growing, and you shall come with me.' They went on merrily along the road, till they came to a thicket, when out sprang the cat, and killed three of the sons.

'The cat! The cat!' shrieked the soldiers who were with him. And this time the sultan said:

'Seek for it and kill it. It is no longer a cat, but a demon!'

And the soldiers answered him, ‘Did we not tell you, master, what the cat was doing, and did you not say, “My cat and my people”?’

And he answered: ‘True, I said it.’

Now the youngest son had not gone with the rest, but had stayed at home with his mother; and when he heard that his brothers had been killed by the cat he said, ‘Let me go, that it may slay me also.’ His mother entreated him not to leave her, but he would not listen, and he took his sword and a spear and some rice cakes, and went after the cat, which by this time had run off to a great distance.

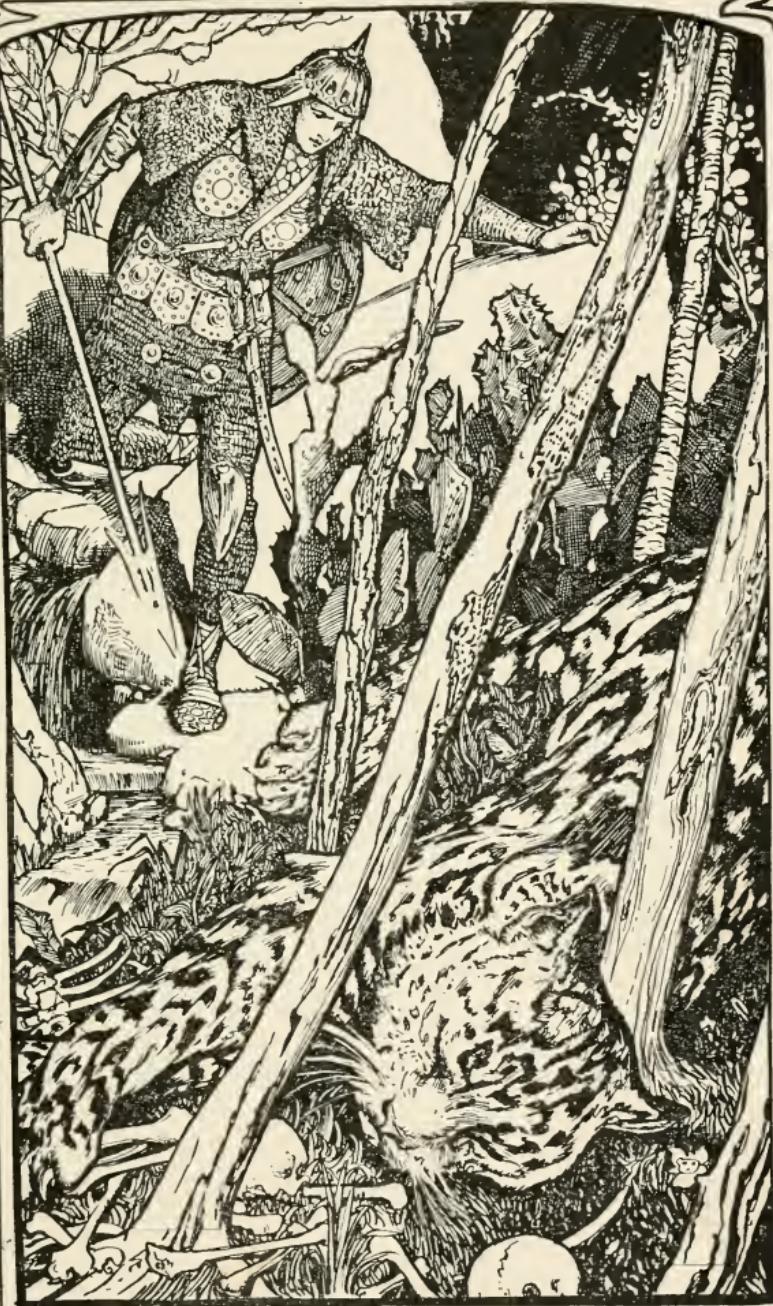
The lad spent many days hunting the cat, which now bore the name of ‘The Nunda, eater of people,’ but though he killed many wild animals he saw no trace of the enemy he was hunting for. There was no beast, however fierce, that he was afraid of, till at last his father and mother begged him to give up the chase after the Nunda.

But he answered: ‘What I have said, I cannot take back. If I am to die, then I die, but every day I must go and seek for the Nunda.’

And again his father offered him what he would, even the crown itself, but the boy would hear nothing, and went on his way.

Many times his slaves came and told him, ‘We have seen footprints, and to-day we shall behold the Nunda.’ But the footprints never turned out to be those of the Nunda. They wandered far through deserts and through forests, and at length came to the foot of a great hill. And something in the boy’s soul whispered that here was the end of all their seeking, and to-day they would find the Nunda.

But before they began to climb the mountain the boy ordered his slaves to cook some rice, and they rubbed the stick to make a fire, and when the fire was kindled they cooked the rice and ate it. Then they began their climb.



The PRINCE FINDS THE NUNDA

Suddenly, when they had almost reached the top, a slave who was on in front cried :

‘ Master! Master! ’ And the boy pushed on to where the slave stood, and the slave said :

‘ Cast your eyes down to the foot of the mountain.’ And the boy looked, and his soul told him it was the Nunda.

And he crept down with his spear in his hand, and then he stopped and gazed below him.

‘ This *must* be the real Nunda,’ thought he. ‘ My mother told me its ears were small, and this one’s are small. She told me it was broad and not long, and this is broad and not long. She told me it had spots like a civet-cat, and this has spots like a civet-cat.’

Then he left the Nunda lying asleep at the foot of the mountain, and went back to his slaves.

‘ We will feast to-day,’ he said ; ‘ make cakes of batter, and bring water,’ and they ate and drank. And when they had finished he bade them hide the rest of the food in the thicket, that if they slew the Nunda they might return and eat and sleep before going back to the town. And the slaves did as he bade them.

It was now afternoon, and the lad said : ‘ It is time we went after the Nunda.’ And they went till they reached the bottom and came to a great forest which lay between them and the Nunda.

Here the lad stopped, and ordered every slave that wore two cloths to cast one away and tuck up the other between his legs. ‘ For,’ said he, ‘ the wood is not a little one. Perhaps we may be caught by the thorns, or perhaps we may have to run before the Nunda, and the cloth might bind our legs, and cause us to fall before it.’

And they answered, ‘ Good, master,’ and did as he bade them. Then they crawled on their hands and knees to where the Nunda lay asleep.

Noiselessly they crept along till they were quite close to it ; then, at a sign from the boy, they threw their

spears. The Nunda did not stir: the spears had done their work, but a great fear seized them all, and they ran away and climbed the mountain.

The sun was setting when they reached the top, and glad they were to take out the fruit and the cakes and the water which they had hidden away, and sit down and rest themselves. And after they had eaten and were filled, they lay down and slept till morning.

When the dawn broke they rose up and cooked more rice, and drank more water. After that they walked all round the back of the mountain to the place where they had left the Nunda, and they saw it stretched out where they had found it, stiff and dead. And they took it up and carried it back to the town, singing as they went, 'He has killed the Nunda, the eater of people.'

And when his father heard the news, and that his son was come, and was bringing the Nunda with him, he felt that the man did not dwell on the earth whose joy was greater than his. And the people bowed down to the boy and gave him presents, and loved him, because he had delivered them from the bondage of fear, and had slain the Nunda.

[Adapted from Swahili Tales.]

THE STORY OF HASSEBU

ONCE upon a time there lived a poor woman who had only one child, and he was a little boy called Hassebu. When he ceased to be a baby, and his mother thought it was time for him to learn to read, she sent him to school. And, after he had done with school, he was put into a shop to learn how to make clothes, and did not learn ; and he was put to do silversmith's work, and did not learn ; and whatsoever he was taught, he did not learn it. His mother never wished him to do anything he did not like, so she said : ' Well, stay at home, my son.' And he stayed at home, eating and sleeping.

One day the boy said to his mother : ' What was my father's business ? '

' He was a very learned doctor,' answered she.

' Where, then, are his books ? ' asked Hassebu.

' Many days have passed, and I have thought nothing of them. But look inside and see if they are there.' So Hassebu looked, and saw they were eaten by insects, all but one book, which he took away and read.

He was sitting at home one morning poring over the medicine book, when some neighbours came by and said to his mother : ' Give us this boy, that we may go together to cut wood.' For wood-cutting was their trade, and they loaded several donkeys with the wood, and sold it in the town.

And his mother answered, ' Very well ; to-morrow I will buy him a donkey, and you can all go together.'

So the donkey was bought, and the neighbours came,

and they worked hard all day, and in the evening they brought the wood back into the town, and sold it for a good sum of money. And for six days they went and did the like, but on the seventh it rained, and the wood-cutters ran and hid in the rocks, all but Hassebu, who did not mind wetting, and stayed where he was.

While he was sitting in the place where the wood-cutters had left him, he took up a stone that lay near him, and idly dropped it on the ground. It rang with a hollow sound, and he called to his companions, and said, 'Come here and listen; the ground seems hollow!'

'Knock again!' cried they. And he knocked and listened.

'Let us dig,' said the boy. And they dug, and found a large pit like a well, filled with honey up to the brim.

'This is better than firewood,' said they; 'it will bring us more money. And as you have found it, Hassebu, it is you who must go inside and dip out the honey and give to us, and we will take it to the town and sell it, and will divide the money with you.'

The following day each man brought every bowl and vessel he could find at home, and Hassebu filled them all with honey. And this he did every day for three months.

At the end of that time the honey was very nearly finished, and there was only a little left, quite at the bottom, and that was very deep down, so deep that it seemed as if it must be right in the middle of the earth. Seeing this, the men said to Hassebu, 'We will put a rope under your arms, and let you down, so that you may scrape up all the honey that is left, and when you have done we will lower the rope again, and you shall make it fast, and we will draw you up.'

'Very well,' answered the boy, and he went down, and he scraped and scraped till there was not so much honey left as would cover the point of a needle. 'Now I am ready!' he cried; but they consulted together and

said, ‘ Let us leave him there inside the pit, and take his share of the money, and we will tell his mother, “ Your son was caught by a lion and carried off into the forest, and we tried to follow him, but could not.” ’

Then they arose and went into the town and told his mother as they had agreed, and she wept much and made her mourning for many months. And when the men were dividing the money, one said, ‘ Let us send a little to our friend’s mother,’ and they sent some to her; and every day one took her rice, and one oil; one took her meat, and one took her cloth, every day.

It did not take long for Hassebu to find out that his companions had left him to die in the pit, but he had a brave heart, and hoped that he might be able to find a way out for himself. So he at once began to explore the pit and found it ran back a long way underground. And by night he slept, and by day he took a little of the honey he had gathered and ate it; and so many days passed by.

One morning, while he was sitting on a rock having his breakfast, a large scorpion dropped down at his feet, and he took a stone and killed it, fearing it would sting him. Then suddenly the thought darted into his head, ‘ This scorpion must have come from somewhere! Perhaps there is a hole. I will go and look for it,’ and he felt all round the walls of the pit till he found a very little hole in the roof of the pit, with a tiny glimmer of light at the far end of it. Then his heart felt glad, and he took out his knife and dug and dug, till the little hole became a big one, and he could wriggle himself through. And when he had got outside, he saw a large open space in front of him, and a path leading out of it.

He went along the path, on and on, till he reached a large house, with a golden door standing open. Inside was a great hall, and in the middle of the hall a throne set with precious stones and a sofa spread with the

softest cushions. And he went in and lay down on it, and fell fast asleep, for he had wandered far.

By-and-by there was a sound of people coming through the courtyard, and the measured tramp of soldiers. This was the King of the Snakes coming in state to his palace.

They entered the hall, but all stopped in surprise at finding a man lying on the king's own bed. The soldiers wished to kill him at once, but the king said, 'Leave him alone, put me on a chair,' and the soldiers who were carrying him knelt on the floor, and he slid from their shoulders on to a chair. When he was comfortably seated, he turned to his soldiers, and bade them wake the stranger gently. And they woke him, and he sat up and saw many snakes all round him, and one of them very beautiful, decked in royal robes.

'Who are you?' asked Hassebu.

'I am the King of the Snakes,' was the reply, 'and this is my palace. And will you tell me who you are, and where you come from?'

'My name is Hassebu, but whence I come I know not, nor whither I go.'

'Then stay for a little with me,' said the king, and he bade his soldiers bring water from the spring and fruits from the forest, and to set them before the guest.

For some days Hassebu rested and feasted in the palace of the King of the Snakes, and then he began to long for his mother and his own country. So he said to the King of the Snakes, 'Send me home, I pray.'

But the King of the Snakes answered, 'When you go home, you will do me evil!'

'I will do you no evil,' replied Hassebu; 'send me home, I pray.'

But the king said, 'I know it. If I send you home, you will come back, and kill me. I dare not do it.' But Hassebu begged so hard that at last the king said, 'Swear that when you get home you will not go to

bathe where many people are gathered.' And Hassebu swore, and the king ordered his soldiers to take Hassebu



Hassebu & The Serpent-King

in sight of his native city. Then he went straight to his mother's house, and the heart of his mother was glad.

Now the Sultan of the city was very ill, and all the

wise men said that the only thing to cure him was the flesh of the King of the Snakes, and that the only man who could get it was a man with a strange mark on his chest. So the Vizir had set people to watch at the public baths, to see if such a man came there.

For three days Hassebu remembered his promise to the King of the Snakes, and did not go near the baths; then came a morning so hot he could hardly breathe, and he forgot all about it.

The moment he had slipped off his robe he was taken before the Vizir, who said to him, 'Lead us to the place where the King of the Snakes lives.'

'I do not know it!' answered he, but the Vizir did not believe him, and had him bound and beaten till his back was all torn.

Then Hassebu cried, 'Loose me, that I may take you.'

They went together a long, long way, till they reached the palace of the King of the Snakes.

And Hassebu said to the King: 'It was not I: look at my back and you will see how they drove me to it.'

'Who has beaten you like this?' asked the King.

'It was the Vizir,' replied Hassebu.

'Then I am already dead,' said the King sadly, 'but you must carry me there yourself.'

So Hassebu carried him. And on the way the King said, 'When I arrive, I shall be killed, and my flesh will be cooked. But take some of the water that I am boiled in, and put it in a bottle and lay it on one side. The Vizir will tell you to drink it, but be careful not to do so. Then take some more of the water, and drink it, and you will become a great physician, and the third supply you will give to the Sultan. And when the Vizir comes to you and asks, "Did you drink what I gave you?" you must answer, "I did, and this is for you," and he will drink it and die, and your soul will rest.'

And they went their way into the town, and all happened as the King of the Snakes had said.

And the Sultan loved Hassebu, who became a great physician, and cured many sick people. But he was always sorry for the poor King of the Snakes.

[Adapted from Swahili Tales.]

THE STORY OF HALFMAN

IN a certain town there lived a judge who was married but had no children. One day he was standing lost in thought before his house, when an old man passed by.

‘What is the matter, sir,’ said he; ‘you look troubled?’

‘Oh, leave me alone, my good man!’

‘But what is it?’ persisted the other.

‘Well, I am successful in my profession and a person of importance, but I care nothing for it all, as I have no children.’

Then the old man said, ‘Here are twelve apples. If your wife eats them, she will have twelve sons.’

The judge thanked him joyfully as he took the apples, and went to seek his wife. ‘Eat these apples at once,’ he cried, ‘and you will have twelve sons.’

So she sat down and ate eleven of them, but just as she was in the middle of the twelfth her sister came in, and she gave her the half that was left.

The eleven sons came into the world, strong and handsome boys; but when the twelfth was born, there was only half of him.

By-and-by they all grew into men, and one day they told their father it was high time he found wives for them. ‘I have a brother,’ he answered, ‘who lives away in the East, and he has twelve daughters; go and marry them.’ So the twelve sons saddled their horses and rode for twelve days, till they met an old woman.

‘Good greeting to you, young men!’ said she, ‘we have

waited long for you, your uncle and I. The girls have become women, and are sought in marriage by many, but I knew you would come one day, and I have kept them for you. Follow me into my house.'

And the twelve brothers followed her gladly, and their father's brother stood at the door, and gave them meat and drink. But at night, when every one was asleep, Halfman crept softly to his brothers, and said to them, 'Listen, all of you! This man is no uncle of ours, but an ogre.'

'Nonsense; of course he is our uncle,' answered they.

'Well, this very night you will see!' said Halfman. And he did not go to bed, but hid himself and watched.

Now in a little while he saw the wife of the ogre steal into the room on tiptoe and spread a red cloth over the brothers and then go and cover her daughters with a white cloth. After that she lay down and was soon snoring loudly. When Halfman was quite sure she was sound asleep, he took the red cloth from his brothers and put it on the girls, and laid their white cloth over his brothers. Next he drew their scarlet caps from their heads and exchanged them for the veils which the ogre's daughters were wearing. This was hardly done when he heard steps coming along the floor, so he hid himself quickly in the folds of a curtain. There was only half of him!

The ogress came slowly and gently along, stretching out her hands before her, so that she might not fall against anything unawares, for she had only a tiny lantern slung at her waist, which did not give much light. And when she reached the place where the sisters were lying, she stooped down and held a corner of the cloth up to the lantern. Yes! it certainly was red! Still, to make sure that there was no mistake, she passed her hands lightly over their heads, and felt the caps that covered them. Then she was quite certain the brothers lay sleeping before her, and began to kill them one by

one. And Halfman whispered to his brothers, 'Get up and run for your lives, as the ogress is killing her daughters.' The brothers needed no second bidding, and in a moment were out of the house.

By this time the ogress had slain all her daughters but one, who awoke suddenly and saw what had happened. 'Mother, what are you doing?' cried she. 'Do you know that you have killed my sisters?'

'Oh, woe is me!' wailed the ogress. 'Halfman has outwitted me after all!' And she turned to wreak vengeance on him, but he and his brothers were far away.

They rode all day till they got to the town where their real uncle lived, and inquired the way to his house.

'Why have you been so long in coming?' asked he, when they had found him.

'Oh, dear uncle, we were very nearly not coming at all!' replied they. 'We fell in with an ogress who took us home and would have killed us if it had not been for Halfman. He knew what was in her mind and saved us, and here we are. Now give us each a daughter to wife, and let us return whence we came.'

'Take them!' said the uncle; 'the eldest for the eldest, the second for the second, and so on to the youngest.'

But the wife of Halfman was the prettiest of them all, and the other brothers were jealous and said to each other: 'What, is he who is only half a man to get the best? Let us put him to death and give his wife to our eldest brother!' And they waited for a chance.

After they had all ridden, in company with their brides, for some distance, they arrived at a brook, and one of them asked, 'Now, who will go and fetch water from the brook?'

'Halfman is the youngest,' said the elder brother, 'he must go.'

So Halfman got down and filled a skin with water, and they drew it up by a rope and drank. When they had done drinking, Halfman, who was standing in the

middle of the stream, called out: 'Throw me the rope and draw me up, for I cannot get out alone.' And the brothers threw him a rope to draw him up the steep bank; but when he was half-way up they cut the rope, and he fell back into the stream. Then the brothers rode away as fast as they could, with his bride.

Halfman sank down under the water from the force of the fall, but before he touched the bottom a fish came and said to him, 'Fear nothing, Halfman; I will help you.' And the fish guided him to a shallow place, so that he scrambled out. On the way it said to him, 'Do you understand what your brothers, whom you saved from death, have done to you?'

'Yes; but what am I to do?' asked Halfman.

'Take one of my scales,' said the fish, 'and when you find yourself in danger, throw it in the fire. Then I will appear before you.'

'Thank you,' said Halfman, and went his way, while the fish swam back to its home.

The country was strange to Halfman, and he wandered about without knowing where he was going, till he suddenly found the ogress standing before him. 'Ah, Halfman, have I got you at last? You killed my daughters and helped your brothers to escape. What do you think I shall do with you?'

'Whatever you like!' said Halfman.

'Come into my house, then,' said the ogress, and he followed her. 'Look here!' she called to her husband, 'I have got hold of Halfman. I am going to roast him, so be quick and make up the fire!'

So the ogre brought wood, and heaped it up till the flames roared up the chimney. Then he turned to his wife and said: 'It is all ready, let us put him on!'

'What is the hurry, my good ogre?' asked Halfman. 'You have me in your power, and I cannot escape. I am so thin now, I shall hardly make one mouthful. Better fatten me up; you will enjoy me much more.'

‘That is a very sensible remark,’ replied the ogre; ‘but what fattens you quickest?’

‘Butter, meat, and red wine,’ answered Halfman.

‘Very good; we will lock you into this room, and here you shall stay till you are ready for eating.’

So Halfman was locked into the room, and the ogre and his wife brought him his food. At the end of three months he said to his gaolers: ‘Now I have got quite fat; take me out, and kill me.’

‘Get out, then!’ said the ogre.

‘But,’ went on Halfman, ‘you and your wife had better go to invite your friends to the feast, and your daughter can stay in the house and look after me!’

‘Yes, that is a good idea,’ answered they.

‘You had better bring the wood in here,’ continued Halfman, ‘and I will split it up small, so that there may be no delay in cooking me.’

So the ogress gave Halfman a pile of wood and an axe, and then set out with her husband, leaving Halfman and her daughter busy in the house.

After he had chopped for a little while he called to the girl, ‘Come and help me, or else I shan’t have it all ready when your mother gets back.’

‘All right,’ said she, and held a billet of wood for him to chop. But he raised his axe and cut off her head, and ran away like the wind. By-and-by the ogre and his wife returned and found their daughter lying without her head, and they began to cry and sob, saying, ‘This is Halfman’s work, why did we listen to him?’ But Halfman was far away.

When he escaped from the house he ran on straight before him for some time, looking for a safe shelter, as he knew that the ogre’s legs were much longer than his, and that it was his only chance. At last he saw an iron tower which he climbed up. Soon the ogre appeared, looking right and left lest his prey should be sheltering behind a rock or tree, but he did not know Halfman

was so near till he heard his voice calling, 'Come up! come up! you will find me here!'

'But how can I come up?' said the ogre, 'I see no door, and I could not possibly climb that tower.'

'Oh, there is no door,' replied Halfman.

'Then how did yon climb up?'

'A fish carried me on his back.'

'And what am I to do?'

'You must go and fetch all your relations, and tell them to bring plenty of sticks; then you must light a fire, and let it burn till the tower becomes red hot. After that you can easily throw it down.'

'Very good,' said the ogre, and he went round to every relation he had, and told them to collect wood and bring it to the tower where Halfman was. The men did as they were ordered, and soon the tower was glowing like coral, but when they flung themselves against it to overthrow it, they caught themselves on fire and were burnt to death. And overhead sat Halfman, laughing heartily. But the ogre's wife was still alive, for she had taken no part in kindling the fire.

'Oh,' she shrieked with rage, 'you have killed my daughters and my husband, and all the men belonging to me; how can I get at you to avenge myself?'

'Oh, that is easy enough,' said Halfman. 'I will let down a rope, and if you tie it tightly round you, I will draw it up.'

'All right,' returned the ogress, fastening the rope which Halfman let down. 'Now pull me up.'

'Are you sure it is secure?'

'Yes, quite sure.'

'Don't be afraid.'

'Oh, I am not afraid at all!'

So Halfman slowly drew her up, and when she was near the top he let go the rope, and she fell down and broke her neck. Then Halfman heaved a great sigh and

said, 'That was hard work; the rope has hurt my hands badly, but now I am rid of her for ever.'

So Halfman came down from the tower, and went on, till he got to a desert place, and as he was very tired, he lay down to sleep. While it was still dark, an ogress passed by, and she woke him and said, 'Halfman, to-morrow your brother is to marry your wife.'

'Oh, how can I stop it?' asked he. 'Will you help me?'

'Yes, I will,' replied the ogress.

'Thank you, thank you!' cried Halfman, kissing her on the forehead. 'My wife is dearer to me than anything else in the world, and it is not my brother's fault that I am not dead long ago.'

'Very well, I will rid you of him,' said the ogress, 'but only on one condition. If a boy is born to you, you must give him to me!'

'Oh, anything,' answered Halfman, 'as long as you deliver me from my brother, and get me my wife.'

'Mount on my back, then, and in a quarter of an hour we shall be there.'

The ogress was as good as her word, and in a few minutes they arrived at the outskirts of the town where Halfman and his brothers lived. Here she left him, while she went into the town itself, and found the wedding guests just leaving the brother's house. Unnoticed by anyone, the ogress crept into a curtain, changing herself into a scorpion, and when the brother was going to get into bed, she stung him behind the ear, so that he fell dead where he stood. Then she returned to Halfman and told him to go and claim his bride. He jumped up hastily from his seat, and took the road to his father's house. As he drew near he heard sounds of weeping and lamentations, and he said to a man he met: 'What is the matter?'

'The judge's eldest son was married yesterday, and died suddenly before night.'

‘Well,’ thought Halfman, ‘my conscience is clear anyway, for it is quite plain he coveted my wife, and that is why he tried to drown me.’ He went at once to his father’s room, and found him sitting in tears on the floor. ‘Dear father,’ said Halfman, ‘are you not glad to see me? You weep for my brother, but I am your son too, and he stole my bride from me and tried to drown me in the brook. If he is dead, I at least am alive.’

‘No, no, he was better than you!’ moaned the father.

‘Why, dear father?’

‘He told me you had behaved very ill,’ said he.

‘Well, call my brothers,’ answered Halfman, ‘as I have a story to tell them.’ So the father called them all into his presence. Then Halfman began: ‘After we were twelve days’ journey from home, we met an ogress, who gave us greeting and said, “Why have you been so long coming? The daughters of your uncle have waited for you in vain,” and she bade us follow her to the house, saying, “Now there need be no more delay; you can marry your cousins as soon as you please, and take them with you to your own home.” But I warned my brothers that the man was not our uncle, but an ogre.

‘When we lay down to sleep, she spread a red cloth over us, and covered her daughters with a white one; but I changed the cloths, and when the ogress came back in the middle of the night, and looked at the cloths, she mistook her own daughters for my brothers, and killed them one by one, all but the youngest. Then I woke my brothers, and we all stole softly from the house, and we rode like the wind to our real uncle.

‘And when he saw us, he bade us welcome, and married us to his twelve daughters, the eldest to the eldest, and so on to me, whose bride was the youngest of all and also the prettiest. And my brothers were filled with envy, and left me to drown in a brook, but I was saved by a fish who showed me how to get out. Now,

you are a judge! Who did well, and who did evil — I or my brothers?’

‘Is this story true?’ said the father, turning to his sons.

‘It is true, my father,’ answered they. ‘It is even as Halfman has said, and the girl belongs to him.’

Then the judge embraced Halfman and said to him: ‘You have done well, my son. Take your bride, and may you both live long and happily together! ’

At the end of the year Halfman’s wife had a son, and not long after she came one day hastily into the room, and found her husband weeping. ‘What is the matter?’ she asked.

‘The matter?’ said he.

‘Yes, why are you weeping?’

‘Because,’ replied Halfman, ‘the baby is not really ours, but belongs to an ogress.’

‘Are you mad?’ cried the wife. ‘What do you mean by talking like that?’

‘I promised,’ said Halfman, ‘when she undertook to kill my brother and to give you to me, that the first son we had should be hers.’

‘And will she take him from us now?’ said the poor woman.

‘No, not quite yet,’ replied Halfman; ‘when he is bigger.’

‘And is she to have all our children?’ asked she.

‘No, only this one,’ returned Halfman.

Day by day the boy grew bigger, and one day as he was playing in the street with the other children, the ogress came by. ‘Go to your father,’ she said, ‘and repeat this speech to him: “I want my forfeit; when am I to have it?” ’

‘All right,’ replied the child, but when he went home forgot all about it. The next day the ogress came again, and asked the boy what answer the father had given. ‘I forgot all about it,’ said he.

‘Well, put this ring on your finger, and then you won’t forget.’

‘Very well,’ replied the boy, and went home.

The next morning, as he was at breakfast, his mother said to him, ‘Child, where did you get that ring?’

‘A woman gave it to me yesterday, and she told me, father, to tell you that she wanted her forfeit, and when was she to have it?’

Then his father burst into tears and said, ‘If she comes again you must say to her that your parents bid her take her forfeit at once, and depart.’

At this they both began to weep afresh, and his mother kissed him, and put on his new clothes and said, ‘If the woman bids you to follow her, you must go,’ but the boy did not heed her grief, he was so pleased with his new clothes. And when he went out, he said to his playfellows, ‘Look how smart I am; I am going away with my aunt to foreign lands.’

At that moment the ogress came up and asked him, ‘Did you give my message to your father and mother?’

‘Yes, dear aunt, I did.’

‘And what did they say?’

‘Take it away at once!’

So she took him.

But when dinner-time came, and the boy did not return, his father and mother knew that he would never come back, and they sat down and wept all day. At last Halfman rose up and said to his wife, ‘Be comforted; we will wait a year, and then I will go to the ogress and see the boy, and how he is cared for.’

‘Yes, that will be the best,’ said she.

The year passed away, then Halfman saddled his horse, and rode to the place where the ogress had found him sleeping. She was not there, but not knowing what to do next, he got off his horse and waited. About midnight she suddenly stood before him.

‘Halfman, why did you come here?’ said she.

‘I have a question I want to ask you.’

‘Well, ask it; but I know quite well what it is. Your wife wishes you to ask whether I shall carry off your second son as I did the first.’

‘Yes, that is it,’ replied Halfman. Then he seized her hand and said, ‘Oh, let me see my son, and how he looks, and what he is doing.’

The ogress was silent, but stuck her staff hard in the earth, and the earth opened, and the boy appeared and said, ‘Dear father, have you come too?’ And his father clasped him in his arms, and began to cry. But the boy struggled to be free, saying ‘Dear father, put me down. I have got a new mother, who is better than the old one; and a new father, who is better than you.’

Then his father sat him down and said, ‘Go in peace, my boy, but listen first to me. Tell your father the ogre and your mother the ogress, that never more shall they have any children of mine.’

‘All right,’ replied the boy, and called ‘Mother!’

‘What is it?’

‘You are never to take away any more of my father and mother’s children!’

‘Now that I have got you, I don’t want any more,’ answered she.

Then the boy turned to his father and said, ‘Go in peace, dear father, and give my mother greeting and tell her not to be anxious any more, for she can keep all her children.’

And Halfman mounted his horse and rode home, and told his wife all he had seen, and the message sent by Mohammed — Mohammed the son of Halfman, the son of the judge.



THE CRIMSON FAIRY BOOK

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*THE DEATH OF ABU NOWAS AND OF HIS
WIFE*

ONCE upon a time there lived a man whose name was Abu Nowas, and he was a great favourite with the Sultan of the country, who had a palace in the same town where Abu Nowas dwelt.

One day Abu Nowas came weeping into the hall of the palace where the Sultan was sitting, and said to him : 'Oh, mighty Sultan, my wife is dead.'

'That is bad news,' replied the Sultan ; 'I must get you another wife.' And he bade his Grand Vizir send for the Sultana.

'This poor Abu Nowas has lost his wife,' said he, when she entered the hall.

'Oh, then we must get him another,' answered the Sultana ; 'I have a girl that will suit him exactly,' and clapped her hands loudly. At this signal a maiden appeared and stood before her.

'I have got a husband for you,' said the Sultana.

'Who is he ?' asked the girl.

'Abu Nowas, the jester,' replied the Sultana.

'I will take him,' answered the maiden ; and as Abu Nowas made no objection, it was all arranged. The Sultana had the most beautiful clothes made for the bride, and the Sultan gave the bridegroom his wedding suit, and a thousand gold pieces into the bargain, and soft carpets for the house.

So Abu Nowas took his wife home, and for some time they were very happy, and spent the money freely

which the Sultan had given them, never thinking what they should do for more when that was gone. But come to an end it did, and they had to sell their fine things one by one, till at length nothing was left but a cloak apiece, and one blanket to cover them. ‘We have run through our fortune,’ said Abu Nowas, ‘what are we to do now? I am afraid to go back to the Sultan, for he will command his servants to turn me from the door. But you shall return to your mistress, and throw yourself at her feet and weep, and perhaps she will help us.’

‘Oh, you had much better go,’ said the wife. ‘I shall not know what to say.’

‘Well, then, stay at home, if you like,’ answered Abu Nowas, ‘and I will ask to be admitted to the Sultan’s presence, and will tell him, with sobs, that my wife is dead, and that I have no money for her burial. When he hears that perhaps he will give us something.’

‘Yes, that is a good plan,’ said the wife; and Abu Nowas set out.

The Sultan was sitting in the hall of justice when Abu Nowas entered, his eyes streaming with tears, for he had rubbed some pepper into them. They smarted dreadfully, and he could hardly see to walk straight, and everyone wondered what was the matter with him.

‘Abu Nowas! What has happened?’ cried the Sultan.

‘Oh, noble Sultan, my wife is dead,’ wept he.

‘We must all die,’ answered the Sultan; but this was not the reply for which Abu Nowas had hoped.

‘True, O Sultan, but I have neither shroud to wrap her in, nor money to bury her with,’ went on Abu Nowas, in no wise abashed by the way the Sultan had received his news.

‘Well, give him a hundred pieces of gold,’ said the Sultan, turning to the Grand Vizir. And when the money was counted out Abu Nowas bowed low, and left the hall, his tears still flowing, but with joy in his heart.

‘Have you got anything?’ cried his wife, who was waiting for him anxiously.

‘Yes, a hundred gold pieces,’ said he, throwing down the bag, ‘but that will not last us any time. Now you must go to the Sultana, clothed in sackcloth and robes of mourning, and tell her that your husband, Abu Nowas, is dead, and you have no money for his burial. When she hears that, she will be sure to ask you what has become of the money and the fine clothes she gave us on our marriage, and you will answer, “before he died he sold everything.”’

The wife did as she was told, and wrapping herself in sackcloth went up to the Sultana’s own palace, and as she was known to have been one of Subida’s favourite attendants, she was taken without difficulty into the private apartments.

‘What is the matter?’ inquired the Sultana, at the sight of the dismal figure.

‘My husband lies dead at home, and he has spent all our money, and sold everything, and I have nothing left to bury him with,’ sobbed the wife.

Then Subida took up a purse containing two hundred gold pieces, and said: ‘Your husband served us long and faithfully. You must see that he has a fine funeral.’

The wife took the money, and, kissing the feet of the Sultana, she joyfully hastened home. They spent some happy hours planning how they should spend it, and thinking how clever they had been. ‘When the Sultan goes this evening to Subida’s palace,’ said Abu Nowas, ‘she will be sure to tell him that Abu Nowas is dead. “Not Abu Nowas, it is his wife,” he will reply, and they will quarrel over it, and all the time we shall be sitting here enjoying ourselves. Oh, if they only knew, how angry they would be!’

As Abu Nowas had foreseen, the Sultan went, in the evening after his business was over, to pay his usual visit to the Sultana.

‘Poor Abu Nowas is dead !’ said Subida when he entered the room.

‘It is not Abu Nowas, but his wife who is dead,’ answered the Sultan.

‘No ; really you are quite wrong. She came to tell me herself only a couple of hours ago,’ replied Subida, ‘and as he had spent all their money, I gave her something to bury him with.’

‘You must be dreaming,’ exclaimed the Sultan. ‘Soon after midday Abu Nowas came into the hall, his eyes streaming with tears, and when I asked him the reason he answered that his wife was dead, and they had sold everything they had, and he had nothing left, not so much as would buy her a shroud, far less for her burial.’

For a long time they talked, and neither would listen to the other, till the Sultan sent for the door-keeper and bade him go instantly to the house of Abu Nowas and see if it was the man or his wife who was dead. But Abu Nowas happened to be sitting with his wife behind the latticed window, which looked on the street, and he saw the man coming, and sprang up at once. ‘There is the Sultan’s door-keeper ! They have sent him here to find out the truth. Quick ! throw yourself on the bed and pretend that you are dead.’ And in a moment the wife was stretched out stiffly, with a linen sheet spread across her, like a corpse.

She was only just in time, for the sheet was hardly drawn across her when the door opened and the porter came in. ‘Has anything happened ?’ asked he.

‘My poor wife is dead,’ replied Abu Nowas. ‘Look ! she is laid out here.’ And the porter approached the bed, which was in a corner of the room, and saw the stiff form lying underneath.

‘We must all die,’ said he, and went back to the Sultan.

‘Well, have you found out which of them is dead ?’ asked the Sultan.

'Yes, noble Sultan ; it is the wife,' replied the porter.

'He only says that to please you,' cried Subida in a rage ; and calling to her chamberlain, she ordered him to go at once to the dwelling of Abu Nowas and see which of the two was dead. 'And be sure you tell the truth about it,' added she, 'or it will be the worse for you.'

As her chamberlain drew near the house, Abu Nowas caught sight of him. 'There is the Sultana's chamberlain,' he exclaimed in a fright. 'Now it is my turn to die. Be quick and spread the sheet over me.' And he laid himself on the bed, and held his breath when the chamberlain came in. 'What are you weeping for?' asked the man, finding the wife in tears.

'My husband is dead,' answered she, pointing to the bed ; and the chamberlain drew back the sheet and beheld Abu Nowas lying stiff and motionless. Then he gently replaced the sheet and returned to the palace.

'Well, have you found out this time?' asked the Sultan.

'My lord, it is the husband who is dead.'

'But I tell you he was with me only a few hours ago,' cried the Sultan angrily. 'I must get to the bottom of this before I sleep ! Let my golden coach be brought round at once.'

The coach was before the door in another five minutes, and the Sultan and Sultana both got in. Abu Nowas had ceased being a dead man, and was looking into the street when he saw the coach coming. 'Quick ! quick !' he called to his wife. 'The Sultan will be here directly, and we must both be dead to receive him.' So they laid themselves down, and spread the sheet over them, and held their breath. At that instant the Sultan entered, followed by the Sultana and the chamberlain, and he went up to the bed and found the corpses stiff and motionless. 'I would give a thousand gold pieces to anyone who would tell me the truth about this,' cried he, and at the words Abu Nowas sat up. 'Give them to me,

then,' said he, holding out his hand. 'You cannot give them to anyone who needs them more.'

'Oh, Abu Nowas, you impudent dog!' exclaimed the Sultan, bursting into a laugh, in which the Sultana joined. 'I might have known it was one of your tricks!' But he sent Abu Nowas the gold he had promised, and let us hope that it did not fly so fast as the last had done.

[From *Tünische Märchen*.]

MOTIKATIKA

ONCE upon a time, in a very hot country, a man lived with his wife in a little hut, which was surrounded by grass and flowers. They were perfectly happy together till, by-and-by, the woman fell ill and refused to take any food. The husband tried to persuade her to eat all sorts of delicious fruits that he had found in the forest, but she would have none of them, and grew so thin he feared she would die. 'Is there *nothing* you would like?' he said at last in despair.

'Yes, I think I could eat some wild honey,' answered she. The husband was overjoyed, for he thought this sounded easy enough to get, and he went off at once in search of it.

He came back with a wooden pan quite full, and gave it to his wife. 'I can't eat *that*,' she said, turning away in disgust. 'Look! there are some dead bees in it! I want honey that is quite pure.' And the man threw the rejected honey on the grass, and started off to get some fresh. When he got back he offered it to his wife, who treated it as she had done the first bowlful. 'That honey has got ants in it: throw it away,' she said, and when he brought her some more, she declared it was full of earth. In his fourth journey he managed to find some that she would eat, and then she begged him to get her some water. This took him some time, but at length he came to a lake whose waters were sweetened with sugar. He filled a pannikin quite full, and carried it home to his wife, who drank it eagerly, and said that she now felt quite well.

When she was up and had dressed herself, her husband lay down in her place, saying: 'You have given me a great deal of trouble, and now it is my turn!'

'What is the matter with you?' asked the wife.

'I am thirsty and want some water,' answered he; and she took a large pot and carried it to the nearest spring, which was a good way off. 'Here is the water,' she said to her husband, lifting the heavy pot from her head; but he turned away in disgust.

'You have drawn it from the pool that is full of frogs and willows; you must get me some more.' So the woman set out again and walked still further to another lake.

'This water tastes of rushes,' he exclaimed, 'go and get some fresh.' But when she brought back a third supply he declared that it seemed made up of water-lilies, and that he must have water that was pure, and not spoilt by willows, or frogs, or rushes. So for the fourth time she put her jug on her head, and passing all the lakes she had hitherto tried, she came to another, where the water was golden like honey. She stooped down to drink, when a horrible head bobbed up on the surface.

'How dare you steal my water?' cried the head.

'It is my husband who has sent me,' she replied, trembling all over. 'But do not kill me! You shall have my baby, if you will only let me go.'

'How am I to know which is your baby?' asked the ogre.

'Oh, that is easily managed. I will shave both sides of his head, and hang some white beads round his neck. And when you come to the hut you have only to call "Motikatika!" and he will run to meet you, and you can eat him.'

'Very well,' said the ogre, 'you can go home.' And after filling the pot she returned, and told her husband of the dreadful danger she had been in.

Now, though his mother did not know it, the baby was a magician, and he had heard all that his mother had

promised the ogre; and he laughed to himself as he planned how to outwit her.

The next morning she shaved his head on both sides, and hung the white beads round his neck, and said to him: 'I am going to the fields to work, but you must



THE WOMAN AND THE OGRE

stay at home. Be sure you do not go outside, or some wild beast may eat you.'

'Very well,' answered he.

As soon as his mother was out of sight, the baby took out some magic bones, and placed them in a row before

him. 'You are my father,' he told one bone, 'and you are my mother. You are the biggest,' he said to the third, 'so you shall be the ogre who wants to eat me; and you,' to another, 'are very little, therefore you shall be me. Now, then, tell me what I am to do.'

'Collect all the babies in the village the same size as yourself,' answered the bones; 'shave the sides of their heads, and hang white beads round their necks, and tell them that when anybody calls "Motikatika," they are to answer to it. And be quick, for you have no time to lose.'

Motikatika went out directly, and brought back quite a crowd of babies, and shaved their heads and hung white beads round their little black necks, and just as he had finished, the ground began to shake, and the huge ogre came striding along, crying: 'Motikatika! Motikatika!'

'Here we are! here we are!' answered the babies, all running to meet him.

'It is Motikatika I want,' said the ogre.

'We are all Motikatika,' they replied. And the ogre sat down in bewilderment, for he dared not eat the children of people who had done him no wrong, or a heavy punishment would befall him. The children waited for a little, wondering, and then they went away.

The ogre remained where he was, till the evening, when the woman returned from the fields.

'I have not seen Motikatika,' said he.

'But why did you not call him by his name, as I told you?' she asked.

'I did, but all the babies in the village seemed to be named Motikatika,' answered the ogre; 'you cannot think the number who came running to me.'

The woman did not know what to make of it, so, to keep him in a good temper, she entered the hut and prepared a bowl of maize, which she brought him.

'I do not want maize, I want the baby,' grumbled he, 'and I will have him.'

‘Have patience,’ answered she; ‘I will call him, and you can eat him at once.’ And she went into the hut and cried, ‘Motikatika! ’

‘I am coming, mother,’ replied he; but first he took out his bones, and, crouching down on the ground behind the hut, asked them how he should escape the ogre.

‘Change yourself into a mouse,’ said the bones; and so he did, and the ogre grew tired of waiting, and told the woman she must invent some other plan.

‘To-morrow I will send him into the field to pick some beans for me, and you will find him there, and can eat him.’

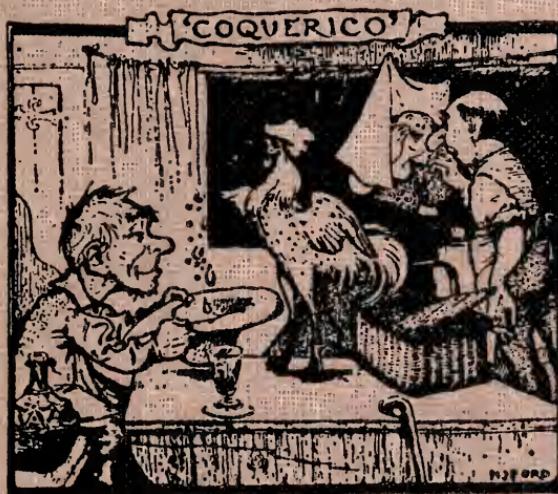
‘Very well,’ replied the ogre, ‘and this time I will take care to have him,’ and he went back to his lake.

Next morning Motikatika was sent out with a basket, and told to pick some beans for dinner. On the way to the field he took out his bones and asked them what he was to do to escape from the ogre. ‘Change yourself into a bird and snap off the beans,’ said the bones. And the ogre chased away the bird, not knowing that it was Motikatika.

The ogre went back to the hut and told the woman that she had deceived him again, and that he would not be put off any longer.

‘Return here this evening,’ answered she, ‘and you will find him in bed under this white coverlet. Then you can carry him away, and eat him at once.’

But the boy heard, and consulted his bones, which said: ‘Take the red coverlet from your father’s bed, and put yours on his,’ and so he did. And when the ogre came, he seized Motikatika’s father and carried him outside the hut and ate him. When his wife found out the mistake, she cried bitterly; but Motikatika said: ‘It is only just that he should be eaten, and not I; for it was he, and not I, who sent you to fetch the water.’



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THE SACRED MILK OF KOUMONGOÉ

FAR away, in a very hot country, there once lived a man and woman who had two children, a son named Koané and a daughter called Thakané.

Early in the morning and late in the evenings the parents worked hard in the fields, resting, when the sun was high, under the shade of some tree. While they were absent the little girl kept house alone, for her brother always got up before the dawn, when the air was fresh and cool, and drove out the cattle to the sweetest patches of grass he could find.

One day, when Koané had slept later than usual, his father and mother went to their work before him, and there was only Thakané to be seen busy making the bread for supper.

‘Thakané,’ he said, ‘I am thirsty. Give me a drink from the tree Koumongoé, which has the best milk in the world.’

‘Oh, Koané,’ cried his sister, ‘you know that we are forbidden to touch that tree. What would father say when he came home? For he would be sure to know.’

‘Nonsense,’ replied Koané, ‘there is so much milk in Koumongoé that he will never miss a little. If you won’t give it to me, I sha’n’t take the cattle out. They will just have to stay all day in the hut, and you know that they will starve.’ And he turned from her in a rage, and sat down in the corner.

After a while Thakané said to him: ‘It is getting hot. had you not better drive out the cattle now?’

But Koané only answered sulkily: 'I told you I am not going to drive them out at all. If I have to do without milk, they shall do without grass.'

Thakané did not know what to do. She was afraid to disobey her parents, who would most likely beat her, yet the beasts would be sure to suffer if they were kept in, and she would perhaps be beaten for that too. So at last she took an axe and a tiny earthen bowl, she cut a very small hole in the side of Koumongoé, and out gushed enough milk to fill the bowl.

'Here is the milk you wanted,' said she, going up to Koané, who was still sulking in his corner.

'What is the use of that?' grumbled Koané; 'why, there is not enough to drown a fly. Go and get me three times as much!'

Trembling with fright, Thakané returned to the tree, and struck it a sharp blow with the axe. In an instant there poured forth such a stream of milk that it ran like a river into the hut.

'Koané! Koané!' cried she, 'come and help me to plug up the hole. There will be no milk left for our father and mother.' But Koané could not stop it any more than Thakané, and soon the milk was flowing through the hut downhill towards their parents in the fields below.

The man saw the white stream a long way off, and guessed what had happened.

'Wife, wife,' he called loudly to the woman, who was working at a little distance: 'Do you see Koumongoé running fast down the hill? That is some mischief of the children's, I am sure. I must go home and find out what is the matter.' And they both threw down their hoes and hurried to the side of Koumongoé.

Kneeling on the grass, the man and his wife made a cup of their hands and drank the milk from it. And no sooner had they done this, than Koumongoé flowed back again up the hill, and entered the hut.

'Thakané,' said the parents, severely, when they reached

home panting from the heat of the sun, 'what have you been doing? Why did Koumongoé come to us in the fields instead of staying in the garden?'

'It was Koané's fault,' answered Thakané. 'He would not take the cattle to feed until he drank some of the milk from Koumongoé. So, as I did not know what else to do, I gave it to him.'

The father listened to Thakané's words, but made no answer. Instead, he went outside and brought in two sheepskins, which he stained red and sent for a blacksmith to forge some iron rings. The rings were then passed over Thakané's arms and legs and neck, and the skins fastened on her before and behind. When all was ready, the man sent for his servants and said :

'I am going to get rid of Thakané.'

'Get rid of your only daughter?' they answered, in surprise. 'But why?'

'Because she has eaten what she ought not to have eaten. She has touched the sacred tree which belongs to her mother and me alone.' And, turning his back, he called to Thakané to follow him, and they went down the road which led to the dwelling of an ogre.

They were passing along some fields where the corn was ripening, when a rabbit suddenly sprang out at their feet, and standing on its hind legs, it sang :

Why do you give to the ogre
Your child, so fair, so fair?

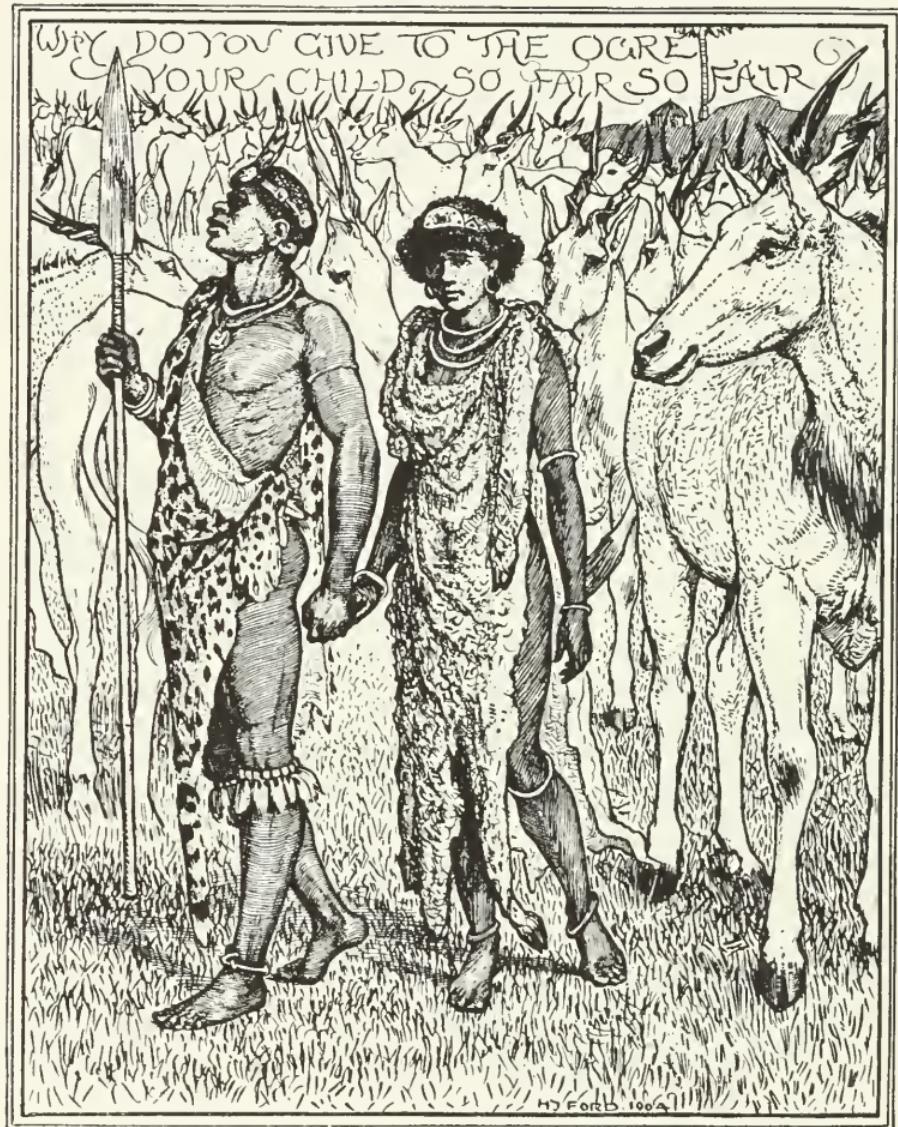
'You had better ask her,' replied the man, 'she is old enough to give you an answer.'

Then, in her turn, Thakané sang :

I gave Koumongoé to Koané,
Koumongoé to the keeper of beasts ;
For without Koumongoé they could not go to the meadows :
Without Koumongoé they would starve in the hut ;
That was why I gave him the Koumongoé of my father.

And when the rabbit heard that, he cried : 'Wretched

man! it is you whom the ogre should eat, and not your beautiful daughter.'



But the father paid no heed to what the rabbit said, and only walked on the faster, bidding Thakané to keep close behind him. By-and-by they met with a troop of

great deer, called elands, and they stopped when they saw Thakané and sang :

Why do you give to the ogre
Your child, so fair, so fair ?

‘ You had better ask her,’ replied the man, ‘ she is old enough to give you an answer.’

Then, in her turn, Thakané sang :

I gave Koumongoé to Koané,
Koumongoé to the keeper of beasts ;
For without Koumongoé they could not go to the meadows :
Without Koumongoé they would starve in the hut ;
That was why I gave him the Koumongoé of my father.

And the elands all cried : ‘ Wretched man ! it is you whom the ogre should eat, and not your beautiful daughter.’

By this time it was nearly dark, and the father said they could travel no further that night, and must go to sleep where they were. Thakané was thankful indeed when she heard this, for she was very tired, and found the two skins fastened round her almost too heavy to carry. So, in spite of her dread of the ogre, she slept till dawn, when her father woke her, and told her roughly that he was ready to continue their journey.

Crossing the plain, the girl and her father passed a herd of gazelles feeding. They lifted their heads, wondering who was out so early, and when they caught sight of Thakané, they sang :

Why do you give to the ogre
Your child, so fair, so fair ?

‘ You had better ask her,’ replied the man, ‘ she is old enough to answer for herself.’

Then, in her turn, Thakané sang :

I gave Koumongoé to Koané,
Koumongoé to the keeper of beasts ;
For without Koumongoé they could not go to the meadows :
Without Koumongoé they would starve in the hut ;
That was why I gave him the Koumongoé of my father.

And the gazelles all cried: 'Wretched man! it is you whom the ogre should eat, and not your beautiful daughter.'

At last they arrived at the village where the ogre lived, and they went straight to his hut. He was nowhere to be seen, but in his place was his son Masilo, who was not an ogre at all, but a very polite young man. He ordered his servants to bring a pile of skins for Thakané to sit on, but told her father he must sit on the ground. Then, catching sight of the girl's face, which she had kept bent down, he was struck by its beauty, and put the same question that the rabbit, and the elands, and the gazelles had done.

Thakané answered him as before, and he instantly commanded that she should be taken to the hut of his mother, and placed under her care, while the man should be led to his father. Directly the ogre saw him he bade the servant throw him into the great pot which always stood ready on the fire, and in five minutes he was done to a turn. After that the servant returned to Masilo and related all that had happened.

Now Masilo had fallen in love with Thakané the moment he saw her. At first he did not know what to make of this strange feeling, for all his life he had hated women, and had refused several brides whom his parents had chosen for him. However, they were so anxious that he should marry, that they willingly accepted Thakané as their daughter-in-law, though she did not bring any marriage portion with her.

After some time a baby was born to her, and Thakané thought it was the most beautiful baby that ever was seen. But when her mother-in-law saw it was a girl, she wrung her hands and wept, saying:

'O miserable mother! Miserable child! Alas for you! why were you not a boy!'

Thakané, in great surprise, asked the meaning of her distress; and the old woman told her that it was the

custom in that country that all the girls who were born should be given to the ogre to eat.

Then Thakané clasped the baby tightly in her arms, and cried :

‘ But it is not the custom in *my* country ! There, when children die, they are buried in the earth. No one shall take my baby from me.’

That night, when everyone in the hut was asleep, Thakané rose, and carrying her baby on her back, went down to a place where the river spread itself out into a large lake, with tall willows all round the bank. Here, hidden from everyone, she sat down on a stone and began to think what she should do to save her child.

Suddenly she heard a rustling among the willows, and an old woman appeared before her.

‘ What are you crying for, my dear ? ’ said she.

And Thakané answered : ‘ I was crying for my baby—I cannot hide her for ever, and if the ogre sees her, he will eat her ; and I would rather she was drowned than that.’

‘ What you say is true,’ replied the old woman. ‘ Give me your child, and let me take care of it. And if you will fix a day to meet me here I will bring the baby.’

Then Thakané dried her eyes, and gladly accepted the old woman’s offer. When she got home she told her husband she had thrown it in the river, and as he had watched her go in that direction he never thought of doubting what she said.

On the appointed day, Thakané slipped out when everybody was busy, and ran down the path that led to the lake. As soon as she got there, she crouched down among the willows, and sang softly :

Bring to me Dilah, Dilah the rejected one,
Dilah, whom her father Masilo cast out !

And in a moment the old woman appeared holding the baby in her arms. Dilah had become so big and strong,

that Thakané's heart was filled with joy and gratitude, and she stayed as long as she dared, playing with her baby. At last she felt she must return to the village, lest she should be missed, and the child was handed back to the old woman, who vanished with her into the lake.

Children grow up very quickly when they live under water, and in less time than anyone could suppose, Dilah had changed from a baby to a woman. Her mother came to visit her whenever she was able, and one day, when they were sitting talking together, they were spied out by a man who had come to cut willows to weave into baskets. He was so surprised to see how like the face of the girl was to Masilo, that he left his work and returned to the village.

'Masilo,' he said, as he entered the hut, 'I have just beheld your wife near the river with a girl who must be your daughter, she is so like you. We have been deceived, for we all thought she was dead.'

When he heard this, Masilo tried to look shocked because his wife had broken the law; but in his heart he was very glad.

'But what shall we do now?' asked he.

'Make sure for yourself that I am speaking the truth by hiding among the bushes the first time Thakané says she is going to bathe in the river, and waiting till the girl appears.'

For some days Thakané stayed quietly at home, and her husband began to think that the man had been mistaken; but at last she said to her husband: 'I am going to bathe in the river.'

'Well, you can go,' answered he. But he ran down quickly by another path, and got there first, and hid himself in the bushes. An instant later, Thakané arrived, and standing on the bank, she sang:

Bring to me Dilah, Dilah the rejected one,
Dilah, whom her father Masilo cast out!

Then the old woman came out of the water, holding the girl, now tall and slender, by the hand. And as Masilo looked, he saw that she was indeed his daughter, and he wept for joy that she was not lying dead in the



BRING TO ME DILAH DILAH THE REJECTED ONE

bottom of the lake. The old woman, however, seemed uneasy, and said to Thakané: 'I feel as if someone was watching us. I will not leave the girl to-day, but will take her back with me'; and sinking beneath the surface, she drew the girl after her. After they had gone, Thakané

returned to the village, which Masilo had managed to reach before her.

All the rest of the day he sat in a corner weeping, and his mother who came in asked : 'Why are you weeping so bitterly, my son ?'

'My head aches,' he answered ; 'it aches very badly.' And his mother passed on, and left him alone.

In the evening he said to his wife : 'I have seen my daughter, in the place where you told me you had drowned her. Instead, she lives at the bottom of the lake, and has now grown into a young woman.'

'I don't know what you are talking about,' replied Thakané. 'I buried my child under the sand on the beach.'

Then Masilo implored her to give the child back to him ; but she would not listen, and only answered : 'If I were to give her back you would only obey the laws of your country and take her to your father, the ogre, and she would be eaten.'

But Masilo promised that he would never let his father see her, and that now she was a woman no one would try to hurt her ; so Thakané's heart melted, and she went down to the lake to consult the old woman.

'What am I to do ?' she asked, when, after clapping her hands, the old woman appeared before her. 'Yesterday Masilo beheld Dilah, and ever since he has entreated me to give him back his daughter.'

'If I let her go he must pay me a thousand head of cattle in exchange,' replied the old woman. And Thakané carried her answer back to Masilo.

'Why, I would gladly give her two thousand !' cried he, 'for she has saved my daughter.' And he bade messengers hasten to all the neighbouring villages, and tell his people to send him at once all the cattle he possessed. When they were all assembled he chose a thousand of the finest bulls and cows, and drove them down to the

river, followed by a great crowd wondering what would happen.

Then Thakané stepped forward in front of the cattle and sang :

Bring to me Dilah, Dilah the rejected one,
Dilah, whom her father Masilo cast out !

And Dilah came from the waters holding out her hands to Masilo and Thakané, and in her place the cattle sank into the lake, and were driven by the old woman to the great city filled with people, which lies at the bottom.

[*Contes Populaires des Bassoutos.*]

THE ORANGE FAIRY BOOK



by Andrew Lang +

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Edited by
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THE STORY OF THE HERO MAKÓMA

From the Senna (Oral Tradition)

ONCE upon a time, at the town of Senna on the banks of the Zambesi, was born a child. He was not like other children, for he was very tall and strong; over his shoulder he carried a big sack, and in his hand an iron hammer. He could also speak like a grown man, but usually he was very silent.

One day his mother said to him: 'My child, by what name shall we know you?'

And he answered: 'Call all the head men of Senna here to the river's bank.' And his mother called the head men of the town, and when they had come he led them down to a deep black pool in the river where all the fierce crocodiles lived.

'O great men!' he said, while they all listened, 'which of you will leap into the pool and overcome the crocodiles?' But no one would come forward. So he turned and sprang into the water and disappeared.

The people held their breath, for they thought: 'Surely the boy is bewitched and throws away his life, for the crocodiles will eat him!' Then suddenly the ground trembled, and the pool, heaving and swirling, became red with blood, and presently the boy rising to the surface swam on shore.

But he was no longer just a boy! He was stronger than any man and very tall and handsome, so that the people shouted with gladness when they saw him.

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‘Now, O my people!’ he cried waving his hand, ‘you know my name — I am Makóma, “the Greater”; for have I not slain the crocodiles in the pool where none would venture?’

Then he said to his mother: ‘Rest gently, my mother, for I go to make a home for myself and become a hero.’ Then, entering his hut, he took Nu-éndo, his iron hammer, and throwing the sack over his shoulder, he went away.

Makóma crossed the Zambesi, and for many moons he wandered towards the north and west until he came to a very hilly country where, one day, he met a huge giant making mountains.

‘Greeting,’ shouted Makóma, ‘who are you?’

‘I am Chi-éswa-mapíri, who makes the mountains,’ answered the giant and who are you?’

‘I am Makóma, which signifies “greater,”’ answered he.

‘Greater than who?’ asked the giant.

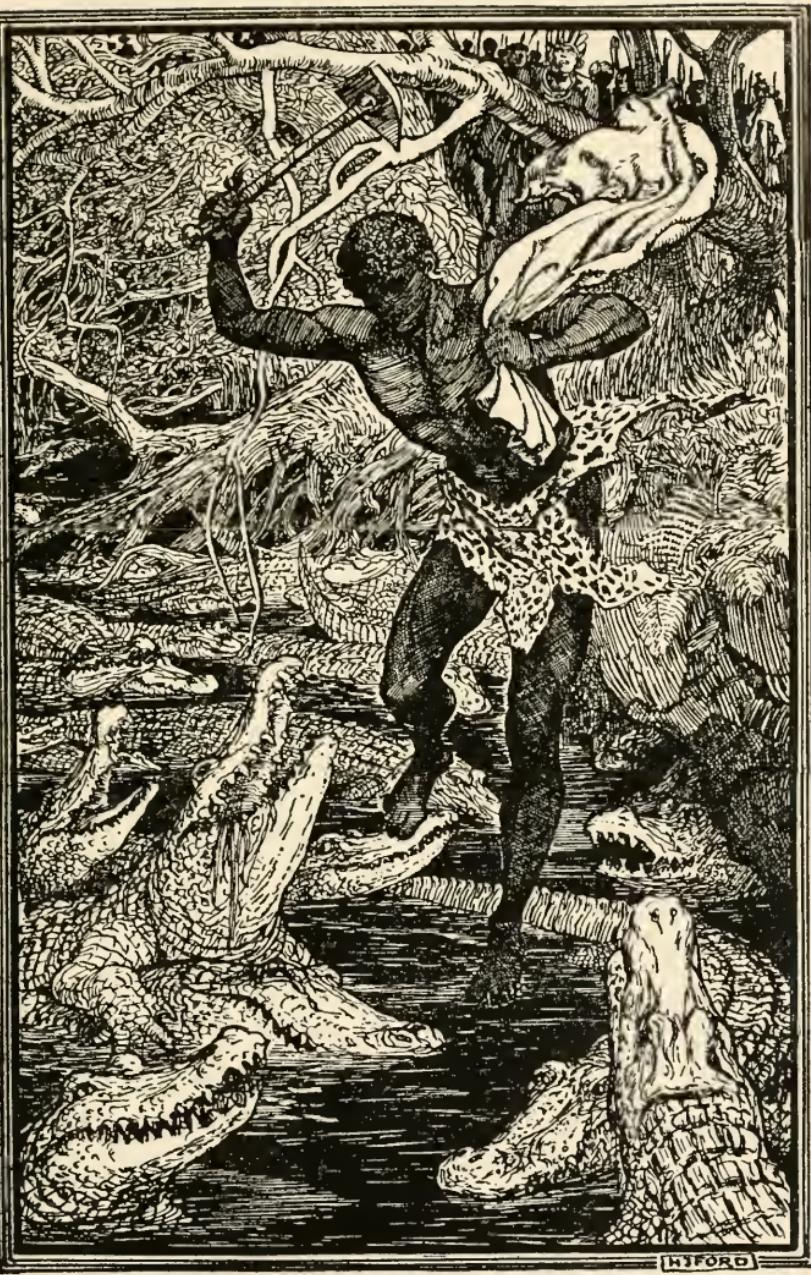
‘Greater than you!’ answered Makóma.

The giant gave a roar and rushed upon him. Makóma said nothing, but swinging his great hammer, Nu-éndo, he struck the giant upon the head.

He struck him so hard a blow that the giant shrank into quite a little man, who fell upon his knees saying: ‘You are indeed greater than I, O Makóma; take me with you to be your slave!’ So Makóma picked him up and dropped him into the sack that he carried upon his back.

He was greater than ever now, for all the giant’s strength had gone into him; and he resumed his journey, carrying his burden with as little difficulty as an eagle might carry a hare.

Before long he came to a country broken up with huge stones and immense clods of earth. Looking over one of the heaps he saw a giant wrapped in dust dragging out the very earth and hurling it in handfuls on either side of him.



WIFORD

MAKOMA LEAPS INTO THE POOL OF CROCODILES

‘Who are you,’ cried Makóma, ‘that pulls up the earth in this way?’

‘I am Chi-dúbula-táka,’ said he, ‘and I am making the river-beds.’

‘Do you know who I am?’ said Makóma. ‘I am he that is called “greater”!’

‘Greater than who?’ thundered the giant.

‘Greater than you!’ answered Makóma.

With a shout, Chi-dúbula-táka seized a great clod of earth and launched it at Makóma. But the hero had his sack held over his left arm and the stones and earth fell harmlessly upon it, and, tightly gripping his iron hammer, he rushed in and struck the giant to the ground. Chi-dúbula-táka grovelled before him, all the while growing smaller and smaller; and when he had become a convenient size Makóma picked him up and put him into the sack beside Chi-éswa-mapíri.

He went on his way even greater than before, as all the river-maker’s power had become his; and at last he came to a forest of bao-babs and thorn trees. He was astonished at their size, for every one was full grown and larger than any trees he had ever seen, and close by he saw Chi-gwísa-míti, the giant who was planting the forest.

Chi-gwísa-míti was taller than either of his brothers, but Makóma was not afraid and called out to him: ‘Who are you, O Big One?’

‘I,’ said the giant, ‘am Chi-gwísa-míti, and I am planting these bao-babs and thorns as food for my children the elephants.’

‘Leave off!’ shouted the hero, ‘for I am Makóma, and would like to exchange a blow with thee!’

The giant, plucking up a monster bao-bab by the roots, struck heavily at Makóma; but the hero sprang aside, and as the weapon sank deep into the soft earth, whirled Nu-éndo the hammer round his head and felled the giant with one blow.

So terrible was the stroke that Chi-gwísá-mítí shrivelled up as the other giants had done; and when he had got back his breath he begged Makóma to take him as his servant. 'For,' said he, 'it is honourable to serve a man so great as thou.'

Makóma, after placing him in his sack, proceeded upon his journey, and travelling for many days he at last reached a country so barren and rocky that not a single living thing grew upon it — everywhere reigned grim desolation. And in the midst of this dead region he found a man eating fire.

'What are you doing?' demanded Makóma.

'I am eating fire,' answered the man, laughing; 'and my name is Chi-ídea-mótó, for I am the flame-spirit, and can waste and destroy what I like.'

'You are wrong,' said Makóma; 'for I am Makóma, who is "greater" than you — and you cannot destroy me!'

The fire-eater laughed again, and blew a flame at Makóma. But the hero sprang behind a rock — just in time, for the ground upon which he had been standing was turned to molten glass, like an overbaked pot, by the heat of the flame-spirit's breath.

Then the hero flung his iron hammer at Chi-ídea-mótó, and, striking him, it knocked him helpless; so Makóma placed him in the sack, Woro-nówu, with the other great men that he had overcome.

And now, truly, Makóma was a very great hero; for he had the strength to make hills, the industry to lead rivers over dry wastes, foresight and wisdom in planting trees, and the power of producing fire when he wished.

Wandering on he arrived one day at a great plain, well watered and full of game; and in the very middle of it, close to a large river, was a grassy spot, very pleasant to make a home upon.

Makóma was so delighted with the little meadow

that he sat down under a large tree, and removing the sack from his shoulder, took out all the giants and set them before him. 'My friends,' said he, 'I have travelled far and am weary. Is not this such a place as would suit a hero for his home? Let us then go, to-morrow, to bring in timber to make a kraal.'

So the next day Makóma and the giants set out to get poles to build the kraal, leaving only Chi-éswa-mapíri to look after the place and cook some venison which they had killed. In the evening, when they returned, they



found the giant helpless and tied to a tree by one enormous hair!

'How is it,' said Makóma, astonished, 'that we find you thus bound and helpless?'

'O Chief,' answered Chi-éswa-mapíri, 'at mid-day a man came out of the river; he was of immense stature, and his grey moustaches were of such length that I could not see where they ended! He demanded of me "Who is thy master?" And I answered: "Makóma, the greatest of heroes." Then the man seized me, and pulling a hair from his moustache, tied me to this tree—even as you see me.'

Makóma was very wroth, but he said nothing, and drawing his finger-nail across the hair (which was as thick and strong as palm rope) cut it, and set free the mountain-maker.

The three following days exactly the same thing happened, only each time with a different one of the party; and on the fourth day Makóma stayed in camp when the others went to cut poles, saying that he would see for himself what sort of man this was that lived in the river and whose moustaches were so long that they extended beyond men's sight.

So when the giants had gone he swept and tidied the camp and put some venison on the fire to roast. At mid-day, when the sun was right overhead, he heard a rumbling noise from the river, and looking up he saw the head and shoulders of an enormous man emerging from it. And behold! right down the river-bed and up the river-bed, till they faded into the blue distance, stretched the giant's grey moustaches!

'Who are you?' bellowed the giant, as soon as he was out of the water.

'I am he that is called Makóma,' answered the hero; 'and, before I slay thee, tell me also what is thy name and what thou doest in the river?'

'My name is Chin-débou Máu-giri,' said the giant. 'My home is in the river, for my moustache is the grey fever-mist that hangs above the water, and with which I bind all those that come unto me so that they die.'

'You cannot bind me!' shouted Makóma, rushing upon him and striking with his hammer. But the river giant was so slimy that the blow slid harmlessly off his green chest, and as Makóma stumbled and tried to regain his balance, the giant swung one of his long hairs around him and tripped him up.

For a moment Makóma was helpless, but remembering the power of the flame-spirit which had entered into



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MAKOMA gets entangled by a hair of CHINDEBOU MAUCIRI

him, he breathed a fiery breath upon the giant's hair and cut himself free.

As Chin-débou Máu-giri leaned forward to seize him the hero flung his sack Woronówu over the giant's slippery head, and gripping his iron hammer, struck him again; this time the blow alighted upon the dry sack and Chin-débou Máu-giri fell dead.

When the four giants returned at sunset with the poles they rejoiced to find that Makóma had overcome the fever-spirit, and they feasted on the roast venison till far into the night; but in the morning, when they awoke, Makóma was already warming his hands at the fire, and his face was gloomy.

'In the darkness of the night, O my friends,' he said presently, 'the white spirits of my fathers came unto me and spoke, saying: "Get thee hence, Makóma, for thou shalt have no rest until thou hast found and fought with Sákatirína, who has five heads, and is very great and strong; so take leave of thy friends, for thou must go alone.'"'

Then the giants were very sad, and bewailed the loss of their hero; but Makóma comforted them, and gave back to each the gifts he had taken from them. Then bidding them 'Farewell,' he went on his way.

Makóma travelled far towards the west; over rough mountains and water-logged morasses, fording deep rivers, and tramping for days across dry deserts where most men would have died, until at length he arrived at a hut standing near some large peaks, and inside the hut were two beautiful women.

'Greeting!' said the hero. 'Is this the country of Sákatirína of five heads, whom I am seeking?'

'We greet you, O Great One!' answered the women. 'We are the wives of Sákatirína; your search is at an end, for there stands he whom you seek!' And they pointed to what Makóma had thought were two tall mountain

peaks. 'Those are his legs,' they said; 'his body you cannot see, for it is hidden in the clouds.'

Makóma was astonished when he beheld how tall was the giant; but, nothing daunted, he went forward until he reached one of Sákatirína's legs, which he struck heavily with Nu-éndo. Nothing happened, so he hit again and then again until, presently, he heard a tired, far-away voice saying: 'Who is it that scratches my feet?'

And Makóma shouted as loud as he could, answering: 'It is I, Makóma, who is called "Greater"!' And he listened, but there was no answer.

Then Makóma collected all the dead brushwood and trees that he could find, and making an enormous pile round the giant's legs, set a light to it.

This time the giant spoke; his voice was very terrible, for it was the rumble of thunder in the clouds. 'Who is it,' he said, 'making that fire smoulder around my feet?'

'It is I, Makóma!' shouted the hero. 'And I have come from far away to see thee, O Sákatirína, for the spirits of my fathers bade me go seek and fight with thee, lest I should grow fat, and weary of myself.'

There was silence for a while, and then the giant spoke softly: 'It is good, O Makóma!' he said. 'For I too have grown weary. There is no man so great as I, therefore I am all alone. Guard thyself!' And bending suddenly he seized the hero in his hands and dashed him upon the ground. And lo! instead of death, Makóma had found life, for he sprang to his feet mightier in strength and stature than before, and rushing in he gripped the giant by the waist and wrestled with him.

Hour by hour they fought, and mountains rolled beneath their feet like pebbles in a flood; now Makóma would break away, and summoning up his strength, strike the giant with Nu-éndo his iron hammer, and Sákatirína would pluck up the mountains and hurl them upon the hero, but neither one could slay the other. At last, upon



MAKOMA IN THE HANDS OF SAKATIRINA

the second day, they grappled so strongly that they could not break away; but their strength was failing, and, just as the sun was sinking, they fell together to the ground, insensible.

In the morning when they awoke, Mulímo the Great Spirit was standing by them; and he said: 'O Makóma and Sákatirína! Ye are heroes so great that no man may come against you. Therefore ye will leave the world and take up your home with me in the clouds.' And as he spake the heroes became invisible to the people of the Earth, and were no more seen among them.

(*Native Rhodesian Tales.*)

THE MAGIC MIRROR

From the Senna

A LONG, long while ago, before ever the White Men were seen in Senna, there lived a man called Gopáni-Kúfa.

One day, as he was out hunting, he came upon a strange sight. An enormous python had caught an antelope and coiled itself around it; the antelope, striking out in despair with its horns, had pinned the python's neck to a tree, and so deeply had its horns sunk in the soft wood that neither creature could get away.

'Help!' cried the antelope, 'for I was doing no harm, yet I have been caught, and would have been eaten, had I not defended myself.'

'Help me,' said the python, 'for I am Insáto, King of all the Reptiles, and will reward you well!'

Gopáni-Kúfa considered for a moment, then stabbing the antelope with his assegai, he set the python free.

'I thank you,' said the python; 'come back here with the new moon, when I shall have eaten the antelope, and I will reward you as I promised.'

'Yes,' said the dying antelope, 'he will reward you, and lo! your reward shall be your own undoing!'

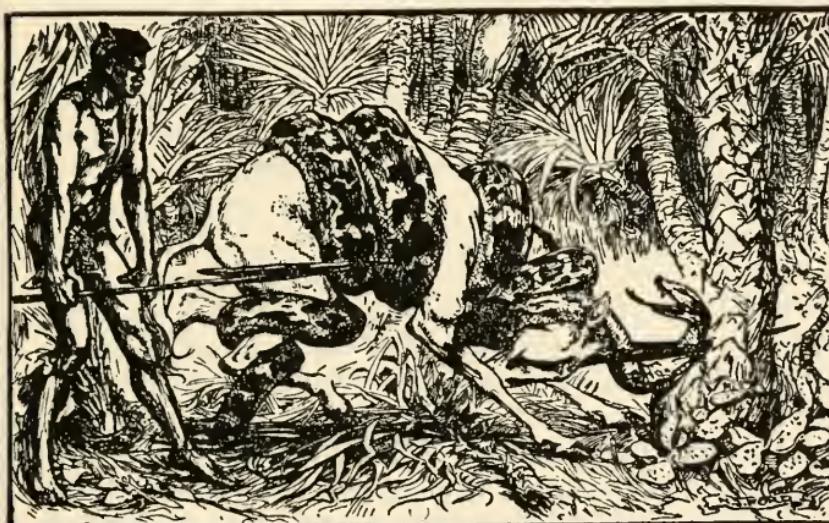
Gopáni-Kúfa went back to his kraal, and with the new moon he returned again to the spot where he had saved the python.

Insáto was lying upon the ground, still sleepy from the effects of his huge meal, and when he saw the man he thanked him again, and said: 'Come with me now to

Pita, which is my own country, and I will give you what you will of all my possessions.'

Gopáni-Kúfa at first was afraid, thinking of what the antelope had said, but finally he consented and followed Insáto into the forest.

For several days they travelled, and at last they came to a hole leading deep into the earth. It was not very wide, but large enough to admit a man. 'Hold on to my tail,' said Insáto, 'and I will go down first, drawing you after me.' The man did so, and Insáto entered.



GOPANI KUFA SEES A STRANGE SIGHT

Down, down, down they went for days, all the while getting deeper and deeper into the earth, until at last the darkness ended and they dropped into a beautiful country; around them grew short green grass, on which browsed herds of cattle and sheep and goats. In the distance Gopáni-Kúfa saw a great collection of houses all square, built of stone and very tall, and their roofs were shining with gold and burnished iron.

Gopáni-Kúfa turned to Insáto, but found, in the place of the python, a man, strong and handsome, with the

great snake's skin wrapped round him for covering; and on his arms and neck were rings of pure gold.

The man smiled. 'I am Insáto,' said he; 'but in my own country I take man's shape — even as you see me — for this is Píta, the land over which I am king.' He then took Gopáni-Kúfa by the hand and led him towards the town.

On the way they passed rivers in which men and women were bathing and fishing and boating; and farther on they came to gardens covered with heavy crops of rice and maize, and many other grains which Gopáni-Kúfa did not even know the name of. And as they passed, the people who were singing at their work in the fields, abandoned their labours and saluted Insáto with delight, bringing also palm wine and green cocoa-nuts for refreshment, as to one returned from a long journey.

'These are my children!' said Insáto, waving his hand towards the people. Gopáni-Kúfa was much astonished at all that he saw, but he said nothing. Presently they came to the town; everything here, too, was beautiful, and everything that a man might desire he could obtain. Even the grains of dust in the streets were of gold and silver.

Insáto conducted Gopáni-Kúfa to the palace, and showing him his rooms, and the maidens who would wait upon him, told him that they would have a great feast that night, and on the morrow he might name his choice of the riches of Píta and it should be given him. Then he went away.

Now Gopáni-Kúfa had a wasp called Zéngi-mízi. Zéngi-mízi was not an ordinary wasp, for the spirit of the father of Gopáni-Kúfa had entered it, so that it was exceedingly wise. In times of doubt Gopáni-Kúfa always consulted the wasp as to what had better be done, so on this occasion he took it out of the little rush basket in which he carried it, saying: 'Zéngi-mízi, what gift shall

I ask of Insáto to-morrow when he would know the reward he shall bestow on me for saving his life?’

‘Biz-z-z,’ hummed Zéngi-mízi, ‘ask him for Sipáo the Mirror.’ And it flew back into its basket.

Gopáni-Kúfa was astonished at this answer; but knowing that the words of Zéngi-mízi were true words, he determined to make the request. So that night they feasted, and on the morrow Insáto came to Gopáni-Kúfa and, giving him greeting joyfully, he said:

‘Now, O my friend, name your choice amongst my possessions and you shall have it!’

‘O king!’ answered Gopáni-Kúfa, ‘out of all your possessions I will have the Mirror, Sipáo.’

The king started. ‘O friend, Gopáni-Kúfa,’ he said, ‘ask anything but that! I did not think that you would request that which is most precious to me.’

‘Let me think over it again then, O king,’ said Gopáni-Kúfa, ‘and to-morrow I will let you know if I change my mind.’

But the king was still much troubled, fearing the loss of Sipáo, for the Mirror had magic powers, so that he who owned it had but to ask and his wish would be fulfilled; to it Insáto owed all that he possessed.

As soon as the king left him, Gopáni-Kúfa again took Zéngi-mízi out of his basket. ‘Zéngi-mízi,’ he said, ‘the king seems loth to grant my request for the Mirror — is there not some other thing of equal value for which I might ask?’

And the wasp answered: ‘There is nothing in the world, O Gopáni-Kúfa, which is of such value as this Mirror, for it is a Wishing Mirror, and accomplishes the desires of him who owns it. If the king hesitates, go to him the next day, and the day after, and in the end he will bestow the Mirror upon you, for you saved his life.’

And it was even so. For three days Gopáni-Kúfa returned the same answer to the king, and, at last, with tears in his eyes, Insáto gave him the Mirror, which was

of polished iron, saying: 'Take Sipáo, then, O Gopáni-Kúfa, and may thy wishes come true. Go back now to thine own country; Sipáo will show you the way.'

Gopáni-Kúfa was greatly rejoiced, and, taking farewell of the king, said to the Mirror:

'Sipáo, Sipáo, I wish to be back upon the Earth again!'

Instantly he found himself standing upon the upper earth; but, not knowing the spot, he said again to the Mirror:

'Sipáo, Sipáo, I want the path to my own kraal!'

And behold! right before him lay the path!

When he arrived home he found his wife and daughter mourning for him, for they thought that he had been eaten by lions; but he comforted them, saying that while following a wounded antelope he had missed his way and had wandered for a long time before he had found the path again.

That night he asked Zéngi-mízi, in whom sat the spirit of his father, what he had better ask Sipáo for next?

'Biz-z-z,' said the wasp, 'would you not like to be as great a chief as Insáto?'

And Gopáni-Kúfa smiled, and took the Mirror and said to it:

'Sipáo, Sipáo, I want a town as great as that of Insáto, the King of Píta; and I wish to be chief over it!'

Then all along the banks of the Zambesi river, which flowed near by, sprang up streets of stone buildings, and their roofs shone with gold and burnished iron like those in Píta; and in the streets men and women were walking, and young boys were driving out the sheep and cattle to pasture; and from the river came shouts and laughter from the young men and maidens who had launched their canoes and were fishing. And when the people

of the new town beheld Gopáni-Kúfa they rejoiced greatly and hailed him as chief.

Gopáni-Kúfa was now as powerful as Insáto the King of the Reptiles had been, and he and his family moved



into the palace that stood high above the other buildings right in the middle of the town. His wife was too astonished at all these wonders to ask any questions, but his daughter Shasása kept begging him to tell her how he had suddenly become so great; so at last he revealed

the whole secret, and even entrusted Sipáo the Mirror to her care, saying:

‘It will be safer with you, my daughter, for you dwell apart; whereas men come to consult me on affairs of state, and the Mirror might be stolen.’

Then Shasásá took the Magic Mirror and hid it beneath her pillow, and after that for many years Gopáni-Kúfa ruled his people both well and wisely, so that all men loved him, and never once did he need to ask Sipáo to grant him a wish.

Now it happened that, after many years, when the hair of Gopáni-Kúfa was turning grey with age, there came white men to that country. Up the Zambesi they came, and they fought long and fiercely with Gopáni-Kúfa; but, because of the power of the Magic Mirror, he beat them, and they fled to the sea-coast. Chief among them was one Rei, a man of much cunning, who sought to discover whence sprang Gopáni-Kúfa’s power. So one day he called to him a trusty servant named Butou, and said: ‘Go you to the town and find out for me what is the secret of its greatness.’

And Butou, dressing himself in rags, set out, and when he came to Gopáni-Kúfa’s town he asked for the chief; and the people took him into the presence of Gopáni-Kúfa. When the white man saw him he humbled himself, and said: ‘O Chief! take pity on me, for I have no home! When Rei marched against you I alone stood apart, for I knew that all the strength of the Zambesi lay in your hands, and because I would not fight against you he turned me forth into the forest to starve!’

And Gopáni-Kúfa believed the white man’s story, and he took him in and feasted him, and gave him a house.

In this way the end came. For the heart of Shasásá, the daughter of Gopáni-Kúfa, went forth to Butou the

traitor, and from her he learnt the secret of the Magic Mirror. One night, when all the town slept, he felt beneath her pillow and, finding the Mirror, he stole it and fled back with it to Rei, the chief of the white men.

So it befell that one day, as Gopáni-Kúfa was gazing at the river from a window of the palace, he again saw the war-canoes of the white men; and at the sight his spirit misgave him.

‘Shasása! my daughter!’ he cried wildly, ‘go fetch me the Mirror, for the white men are at hand.’

‘Woe is me, my father!’ she sobbed. ‘The Mirror is gone! For I loved Butou the traitor, and he has stolen Sipáo from me!’

Then Gopáni-Kúfa calmed himself, and drew out Zéngimízi from its rush basket.

‘O spirit of my father!’ he said, ‘what now shall I do?’

‘O Gopáni-Kúfa!’ hummed the wasp, ‘there is nothing now that can be done, for the words of the antelope which you slew are being fulfilled.’

‘Alas! I am an old man—I had forgotten!’ cried the chief. ‘The words of the antelope were true words—my reward shall be my own undoing—they are being fulfilled!’

Then the white men fell upon the people of Gopáni-Kúfa and slew them together with the chief and his daughter Shasása; and since then all the power of the Earth has rested in the hands of the white men, for they have in their possession Sipáo, the Magic Mirror.

HOW ISURO THE RABBIT TRICKED GUDU

FAR away in a hot country, where the forests are very thick and dark, and the rivers very swift and strong, there once lived a strange pair of friends. Now one of the friends was a big white rabbit named Isuro, and the other was a tall baboon called Gudu, and so fond were they of each other that they were seldom seen apart.

One day, when the sun was hotter even than usual, the rabbit awoke from his midday sleep, and saw Gudu the baboon standing beside him.

‘Get up,’ said Gudu; ‘I am going courting, and you must come with me. So put some food in a bag, and sling it round your neck, for we may not be able to find anything to eat for a long while.’

Then the rabbit rubbed his eyes, and gathered a store of fresh green things from under the bushes, and told Gudu that he was ready for the journey.

They went on quite happily for some distance, and at last they came to a river with rocks scattered here and there across the stream.

‘We can never jump those wide spaces if we are burdened with food,’ said Gudu, ‘we must throw it into the river, unless we wish to fall in ourselves.’ And stooping down, unseen by Isuro, who was in front of him, Gudu picked up a big stone, and threw it into the water with a loud splash.

‘It is your turn now,’ he cried to Isuro. And with a heavy sigh, the rabbit unfastened his bag of food, which fell into the river.

The road on the other side led down an avenue of trees, and before they had gone very far Gudu opened the bag that lay hidden in the thick hair about his neck, and began to eat some delicious-looking fruit.

'Where did you get that from?' asked Isuro enviously.



GUDU DROPS A STONE INTO THE WATER.

'Oh, I found after all that I could get across the rocks quite easily, so it seemed a pity not to keep my bag,' answered Gudu.

'Well, as you tricked me into throwing away mine, you ought to let me share with you,' said Isuro. But Gudu pretended not to hear him, and strode along the path.

By-and-bye they entered a wood, and right in front of them was a tree so laden with fruit that its branches

swept the ground. And some of the fruit was still green, and some yellow. The rabbit hopped forward with joy, for he was very hungry; but Gudu said to him: 'Pluck the green fruit, you will find it much the best. I will leave it all for you, as you have had no dinner, and take the yellow for myself.' So the rabbit took one of the green oranges and began to bite it, but its skin was so hard that he could hardly get his teeth through the rind.



'It does not taste at all nice,' he cried, screwing up his face; 'I would rather have one of the yellow ones.'

'No! no! I really could not allow that,' answered Gudu. 'They would only make you ill. Be content with the green fruit.' And as they were all he could get, Isuro was forced to put up with them.

After this had happened two or three times, Isuro at last had his eyes opened, and made up his mind that, whatever Gudu told him, he would do exactly the opposite. However, by this time they had reached the village

where dwelt Gudu's future wife, and as they entered Gudu pointed to a clump of bushes, and said to Isuro: 'Whenever I am eating, and you hear me call out that my food has burnt me, run as fast as you can and gather some of those leaves that they may heal my mouth.'

The rabbit would have liked to ask him why he ate food that he knew would burn him, only he was afraid, and just nodded in reply; but when they had gone on a little further, he said to Gudu:

'I have dropped my needle; wait here a moment while I go and fetch it.'

'Be quick then,' answered Gudu, climbing into a tree. And the rabbit hastened back to the bushes, and gathered a quantity of the leaves, which he hid among his fur, 'for,' thought he, 'if I get them now I shall save myself the trouble of a walk by-and-bye.'

When he had plucked as many as he wanted he returned to Gudu, and they went on together.

The sun was almost setting by the time they reached their journey's end, and being very tired they gladly sat down by a well. Then Gudu's betrothed, who had been watching for him, brought out a pitcher of water — which she poured over them to wash off the dust of the road — and two portions of food. But once again the rabbit's hopes were dashed to the ground, for Gudu said hastily:

'The custom of the village forbids you to eat till I have finished.' And Isuro did not know that Gudu was lying, and that he only wanted more food. So he sat hungrily looking on, waiting till his friend had had enough,

In a little while Gudu screamed loudly: 'I am burnt! I am burnt!' though he was not burnt at all. Now, though Isuro had the leaves about him, he did not dare to produce them at the last moment lest the baboon should guess why he had stayed behind. So he just went round a corner for a short time, and then came

hopping back in a great hurry. But, quick though he was, Gudu had been quicker still, and nothing remained but some drops of water.

‘How unlucky you are,’ said Gudu, snatching the leaves; ‘no sooner had you gone than ever so many people arrived, and washed their hands, as you see, and ate your portion.’ But, though Isuro knew better than to believe him, he said nothing, and went to bed hungrier than he had ever been in his life.

Early next morning they started for another village, and passed on the way a large garden where people were very busy gathering monkey-nuts.

‘You can have a good breakfast at last,’ said Gudu, pointing to a heap of empty shells; never doubting but that Isuro would meekly take the portion shown him, and leave the real nuts for himself. But what was his surprise when Isuro answered:

‘Thank you; I think I should prefer these.’ And, turning to the kernels, never stopped as long as there was one left. And the worst of it was that, with so many people about, Gudu could not take the nuts from him.

It was night when they reached the village where dwelt the mother of Gudu’s betrothed, who laid meat and millet porridge before them.

‘I think you told me you were fond of porridge,’ said Gudu; but Isuro answered: ‘You are mistaking me for somebody else, as I always eat meat when I can get it.’ And again Gudu was forced to be content with the porridge, which he hated.

While he was eating it, however, a sudden thought darted into his mind, and he managed to knock over a great pot of water which was hanging in front of the fire, and put it quite out.

‘Now,’ said the cunning creature to himself, ‘I shall be able in the dark to steal his meat!’ But the rabbit had grown as cunning as he, and standing in a corner

hid the meat behind him, so that the baboon could not find it.

‘O Gudu!’ he cried, laughing aloud, ‘it is you who have taught me how to be clever.’ And calling to the people of the house, he bade them kindle the fire, for Gudu would sleep by it, but that he would pass the night with some friends in another hut.

It was still quite dark when Isuro heard his name called very softly, and, on opening his eyes, beheld Gudu standing by him. Laying his finger on his nose, in token of silence, he signed to Isuro to get up and follow him, and it was not until they were some distance from the hut that Gudu spoke.

‘I am hungry and want something to eat better than that nasty porridge that I had for supper. So I am going to kill one of those goats, and as you are a good cook you must boil the flesh for me.’ The rabbit nodded, and Gudu disappeared behind a rock, but soon returned dragging the dead goat with him. The two then set about skinning it, after which they stuffed the skin with dried leaves, so that no one would have guessed it was not alive, and set it up in the middle of a clump of bushes, which kept it firm on its feet. While he was doing this, Isuro collected sticks for a fire, and when it was kindled, Gudu hastened to another hut to steal a pot which he filled with water from the river, and, planting two branches in the ground, they hung the pot with the meat in it over the fire.

‘It will not be fit to eat for two hours at least,’ said Gudu, ‘so we can both have a nap.’ And he stretched himself out on the ground, and pretended to fall fast asleep, but, in reality, he was only waiting till it was safe to take all the meat for himself. ‘Surely I hear him snore,’ he thought; and he stole to the place where Isuro was lying on a pile of wood, but the rabbit’s eyes were wide open.

'How tiresome,' muttered Gudu, as he went back to his place; and after waiting a little longer he got up, and peeped again, but still the rabbit's pink eyes stared widely. If Gudu had only known, Isuro was asleep all the time; but this he never guessed, and by-and-bye he grew so tired with watching that he went to sleep himself. Soon after, Isuro woke up, and he too felt hungry, so he crept softly to the pot and ate all the meat, while he tied the bones together and hung them in



How GUDU danced & the bones rattled

Gudu's fur. After that he went back to the wood-pile and slept again.

In the morning the mother of Gudu's betrothed came out to milk her goats, and on going to the bushes where the largest one seemed entangled, she found out the trick. She made such lament that the people of the village came running, and Gudu and Isuro jumped up also, and pretended to be as surprised and interested as the rest. But they must have looked guilty after all, for suddenly an old man pointed to them, and cried:

‘Those are the thieves.’ And at the sound of his voice the big Gudu trembled all over.

‘How dare you say such things? I defy you to prove it,’ answered Isuro boldly. And he danced forward, and turned head over heels, and shook himself before them all.

‘I spoke hastily; you are innocent,’ said the old man; ‘but now let the baboon do likewise.’ And when Gudu began to jump the goat’s bones rattled, and the people cried: ‘It is Gudu who is the goat-slayer!’ But Gudu answered:

‘Nay, I did not kill your goat; it was Isuro, and he ate the meat, and hung the bones round my neck. So it is he who should die!’ And the people looked at each other, for they knew not what to believe. At length one man said:

‘Let them both die, but they may choose their own deaths.’

Then Isuro answered:

‘If we must die, put us in the place where the wood is cut, and heap it up all round us, so that we cannot escape, and set fire to the wood; and if one is burned and the other is not, then he that is burned is the goat-slayer.’

And the people did as Isuro had said. But Isuro knew of a hole under the wood-pile, and when the fire was kindled he ran into the hole, but Gudu died there.

When the fire had burned itself out, and only ashes were left where the wood had been, Isuro came out of his hole, and said to the people:

‘Lo! did I not speak well? He who killed your goat is among those ashes.’

(Mashona Stories.)

THE CLEVER CAT

ONCE upon a time there lived an old man who dwelt with his son in a small hut on the edge of the plain. He was very old, and had worked very hard, and when at last he was struck down by illness he felt that he should never rise from his bed again.

So, one day, he bade his wife summon their son, when he came back from his journey to the nearest town, where he had been to buy bread.

'Come hither, my son,' said he; 'I know myself well to be dying, and I have nothing to leave you but my falcon, my cat and my greyhound; but if you make good use of them you will never lack food. Be good to your mother, as you have been to me. And now farewell!'

Then he turned his face to the wall and died.

There was great mourning in the hut for many days, but at length the son rose up, and calling to his greyhound, his cat and his falcon, he left the house saying that he would bring back something for dinner. Wandering over the plain, he noticed a troop of gazelles, and pointed to his greyhound to give chase. The dog soon brought down a fine fat beast, and slinging it over his shoulders, the young man turned homewards. On the way, however, he passed a pond, and as he approached a cloud of birds flew into the air. Shaking his wrist, the falcon seated on it darted into the air, and swooped down upon the quarry he had marked, which fell dead to the ground. The young man picked it up, and put it in his pouch and then went towards home again.

Near the hut was a small barn in which he kept the produce of the little patch of corn, which grew close to the garden. Here a rat ran out almost under his feet, followed by another and another; but quick as thought the cat was upon them and not one escaped her.

When all the rats were killed, the young man left the barn. He took the path leading to the door of the hut, but stopped on feeling a hand laid on his shoulder.

'Young man,' said the Jew (for such was the stranger), 'you have been a good son, and you deserve the piece of luck which has befallen you this day. Come with me to that shining lake yonder, and fear nothing.'

Wondering a little at what might be going to happen to him, the youth did as the Jew bade him, and when they reached the shore of the lake, the old man turned and said to him:

'Step into the water and shut your eyes! You will find yourself sinking slowly to the bottom; but take courage, all will go well. Only bring up as much silver as you can carry, and we will divide it between us.'

So the young man stepped bravely into the lake, and felt himself sinking, sinking, till he reached firm ground at last. In front of him lay four heaps of silver, and in the midst of them a curious white shining stone, marked over with strange characters, such as he had never seen before. He picked it up in order to examine it more closely, and as he held it the stone spoke.

'As long as you hold me, all your wishes will come true,' it said. 'But hide me in your turban, and then call to the Jew that you are ready to come up.'

In a few minutes the young man stood again by the shores of the lake.

'Well, where is the silver?' asked the Jew, who was awaiting him.

'Ah, my father, how can I tell you! So bewildered was I, and so dazzled with the splendours of everything I saw, that I stood like a statue, unable to move. Then

hearing steps approaching I got frightened, and called to you, as you know.'

'You are no better than the rest,' cried the Jew, and turned away in a rage.

When he was out of sight the young man took the stone from his turban and looked at it. 'I want the finest camel that can be found, and the most splendid garments,' said he.

'Shut your eyes then,' replied the stone. And he shut them; and when he opened them again the camel that he had wished for was standing before him, while the festal robes of a desert prince hung from his shoulders. Mounting the camel, he whistled the falcon to his wrist, and, followed by his greyhound and his cat, he started homewards.

His mother was sewing at her door when this magnificent stranger rode up, and, filled with surprise, she bowed low before him.

'Don't you know me, mother?' he said with a laugh. And on hearing his voice the good woman nearly fell to the ground with astonishment.

'How have you got that camel and those clothes?' asked she. 'Can a son of mine have committed murder in order to possess them?'

'Do not be afraid; they are quite honestly come by,' answered the youth. 'I will explain all by-and-by; but now you must go to the palace and tell the king I wish to marry his daughter.'

At these words the mother thought her son had certainly gone mad, and stared blankly at him. The young man guessed what was in her heart, and replied with a smile:

'Fear nothing. Promise all that he asks; it will be fulfilled somehow.'

So she went to the palace, where she found the king sitting in the Hall of Justice listening to the petitions of his people. The woman waited until all had been heard

and the hall was empty, and then went up and knelt before the throne.

‘My son has sent me to ask for the hand of the princess,’ said she.

The king looked at her and thought that she was mad; but, instead of ordering his guards to turn her out, he answered gravely:

‘Before he can marry the princess he must build me a palace of ice, which can be warmed with fires, and wherein the rarest singing-birds can live! ’

‘It shall be done, your Majesty,’ said she, and got up and left the hall.

Her son was anxiously awaiting her outside the palace gates, dressed in the clothes that he wore every day.

‘Well, what have I got to do?’ he asked impatiently, drawing his mother aside so that no one could overhear them.

‘Oh, something quite impossible; and I hope you will put the princess out of your head,’ she replied.

‘Well, but what *is* it?’ persisted he.

‘Nothing but to build a palace of ice wherein fires can burn that shall keep it so warm that the most delicate singing-birds can live in it! ’

‘I thought it would be something much harder than that,’ exclaimed the young man. ‘I will see about it at once.’ And leaving his mother, he went into the country and took the stone from his turban.

‘I want a palace of ice that can be warmed with fires and filled with the rarest singing-birds! ’

‘Shut your eyes, then,’ said the stone; and he shut them, and when he opened them again there was the palace, more beautiful than anything he could have imagined, the fires throwing a soft pink glow over the ice.

‘It is fit even for the princess,’ thought he to himself.

As soon as the king awoke next morning he ran to the window, and there across the plain he beheld the palace.

'That young man must be a great wizard; he may be useful to me.' And when the mother came again to tell



THE JEW BRINGS
THE JEWELS TO THE PRINCESS

him that his orders had been fulfilled he received her with great honour, and bade her tell her son that the wedding was fixed for the following day.

The princess was delighted with her new home, and with her husband also; and several days slipped happily

by, spent in turning over all the beautiful things that the palace contained. But at length the young man grew tired of always staying inside walls, and he told his wife that the next day he must leave her for a few hours, and go out hunting. 'You will not mind?' he asked. And she answered as became a good wife:

'Yes, of course I shall mind; but I will spend the day in planning out some new dresses; and then it will be so delightful when you come back, you know!'

So the husband went off to hunt, with the falcon on his wrist, and the greyhound and the cat behind him — for the palace was so warm that even the cat did not mind living in it.

No sooner had he gone, than the Jew, who had been watching his chance for many days, knocked at the door of the palace.

'I have just returned from a far country,' he said, 'and I have some of the largest and most brilliant stones in the world with me. The princess is known to love beautiful things, perhaps she might like to buy some?'

Now the princess had been wondering for many days what trimming she should put on her dresses, so that they should outshine the dresses of the other ladies at the court balls. Nothing that she thought of seemed good enough, so, when the message was brought that the Jew and his wares were below, she at once ordered that he should be brought to her chamber.

Oh! what beautiful stones he laid before her; what lovely rubies, and what rare pearls! No other lady would have jewels like *those* — of that the princess was quite sure; but she cast down her eyes so that the Jew might not see how much she longed for them.

'I fear they are too costly for me,' she said carelessly; 'and besides, I have hardly need of any more jewels just now.'

'I have no particular wish to sell them myself,'

answered the Jew, with equal indifference. ‘But I have a necklace of shining stones which was left me by my father, and one, the largest, engraven with weird characters, is missing. I have heard that it is in your husband’s possession, and if you can get me that stone you shall have any of these jewels that you choose. But you will have to pretend that you want it for yourself; and, above all, do not mention me, for he sets great store by it, and would never part with it to a stranger! To-morrow I will return with some jewels yet finer than those I have with me to-day. So, madam, farewell!’

Left alone, the princess began to think of many things, but chiefly as to whether she would persuade her husband to give her the stone or not. At one moment she felt he had already bestowed so much upon her that it was a shame to ask for the only object he had kept back. No, it would be mean; she could not do it! But then, those diamonds, and those strings of pearls! After all, they had only been married a week, and the pleasure of giving it to her ought to be far greater than the pleasure of keeping it for himself. And she was sure it *would* be!

Well, that evening, when the young man had supped off his favourite dishes which the princess took care to have specially prepared for him, she sat down close beside him, and began stroking his hand. For some time she did not speak, but listened attentively to all the adventures that had befallen him that day.

‘But I was thinking of you all the time,’ said he at the end, ‘and wishing that I could bring you back something you would like. But, alas! what is there that you do not possess already?’

‘How good of you not to forget me when you are in the midst of such dangers and hardships,’ answered she. ‘Yes, it is true I have many beautiful things; but if you

want to give me a present — and to-morrow is my birth-day — there *is* one thing that I wish for very much.'

'And what is that? Of course you shall have it directly!' he asked eagerly.

'It is that bright stone which fell out of the folds of your turban a few days ago,' she answered, playing with his finger; 'the little stone with all those funny marks upon it. I never saw any stone like it before.'

The young man did not answer at first; then he said, slowly:

'I have promised, and therefore I must perform. But will you swear never to part from it, and to keep it safely about you always? More I cannot tell you, but I beg you earnestly to take heed to this.'

The princess was a little startled by his manner, and began to be sorry that she had ever listened to the Jew. But she did not like to draw back, and pretended to be immensely delighted at her new toy, and kissed and thanked her husband for it.

'After all I needn't give it to the Jew,' thought she as she dropped to sleep.

Unluckily the next morning the young man went hunting again, and the Jew, who was watching, knew this, and did not come till much later than before. At the moment that he knocked at the door of the palace the princess had tired of all her employments, and her attendants were at their wits' end how to amuse her, when a tall negro dressed in scarlet came to announce that the Jew was below, and desired to know if the princess would speak with him.

'Bring him hither at once!' cried she, springing up from her cushions, and forgetting all her resolves of the previous night. In another moment she was bending with rapture over the glittering gems.

'Have you got it?' asked the Jew in a whisper, for the princess's ladies were standing as near as they dared to catch a glimpse of the beautiful jewels.

‘Yes, here,’ she answered, slipping the stone from her sash and placing it among the rest. Then she raised her voice, and began to talk quickly of the prices of the chains and necklaces, and after some bargaining, to deceive the attendants, she declared that she liked one string of pearls better than all the rest, and that the Jew might take away the other things, which were not half so valuable as he supposed.

‘As you please, madam,’ said he, bowing himself out of the palace.

Soon after he had gone a curious thing happened. The princess carelessly touched the wall of her room, which was wont to reflect the warm red light of the fire on the hearth, and found her hand quite wet. She turned round, and — was it her fancy? or did the fire burn more dimly than before? Hurriedly she passed into the picture gallery, where pools of water showed here and there on the floor, and a cold chill ran through her whole body. At that instant her frightened ladies came running down the stairs, crying:

‘Madam! madam! what has happened? The palace is disappearing under our eyes!’

‘My husband will be home very soon,’ answered the princess — who, though nearly as much frightened as her ladies, felt that she must set them a good example. ‘Wait till then, and he will tell us what to do.’

So they waited, seated on the highest chairs they could find, wrapped in their warmest garments, and with piles of cushions under their feet, while the poor birds flew with numbed wings hither and thither, till they were so lucky as to discover an open window in some forgotten corner. Through this they vanished, and were seen no more.

At last, when the princess and her ladies had been forced to leave the upper rooms, where the walls and floors had melted away, and to take refuge in the hall, the young man came home. He had ridden back along a winding road from which he did not see the palace till

he was close upon it, and stood horrified at the spectacle before him. He knew in an instant that his wife must have betrayed his trust, but he would not reproach her, as she must be suffering enough already. Hurrying on he sprang over all that was left of the palace walls, and the princess gave a cry of relief at the sight of him.

‘Come quickly,’ he said, ‘or you will be frozen to death!’ And a dreary little procession set out for the king’s palace, the greyhound and the cat bringing up the rear.

At the gates he left them, though his wife besought him to allow her to enter.

‘You have betrayed me and ruined me,’ he said sternly; ‘I go to seek my fortune alone.’ And without another word he turned and left her.

With his falcon on his wrist, and his greyhound and cat behind him, the young man walked a long way, inquiring of everyone he met whether they had seen his enemy the Jew. But nobody had. Then he bade his falcon fly up into the sky — up, up, and up — and try if *his* sharp eyes could discover the old thief. The bird had to go so high that he did not return for some hours; but he told his master that the Jew was lying asleep in a splendid palace in a far country on the shores of the sea. This was delightful news to the young man, who instantly bought some meat for the falcon, bidding him make a good meal.

‘To-morrow,’ said he, ‘you will fly to the palace where the Jew lies, and while he is asleep you will search all about him for a stone on which is engraved strange signs; this you will bring to me. In three days I shall expect you back here.’

‘Well, I must take the cat with me,’ answered the bird.

The sun had not yet risen before the falcon soared high

into the air, the cat seated on his back, with his paws tightly clasping the bird's neck.

'You had better shut your eyes or you may get giddy,' said the bird; and the cat, who had never before been off the ground except to climb a tree, did as she was bid.



I GO TO SEEK MY FORTUNE ALONE

All that day and all that night they flew, and in the morning they saw the Jew's palace lying beneath them.

'Dear me,' said the cat, opening her eyes for the first time, 'that looks to me very like a rat city down there, let us go down to it; they may be able to help

us.' So they alighted in some bushes in the heart of the rat city. The falcon remained where he was, but the cat lay down outside the principle gate, causing terrible excitement among the rats.

At length, seeing she did not move, one bolder than the rest put its head out of an upper window of the castle, and said, in a trembling voice:

'Why have you come here? What do you want? If it is anything in our power, tell us, and we will do it.'

'If you would have let me speak to you before, I would have told you that I come as a friend,' replied the cat; 'and I shall be greatly obliged if you would send four of the strongest and cunningest among you, to do me a service.'

'Oh, we shall be delighted,' answered the rat, much relieved. 'But if you will inform me what it is you wish them to do I shall be better able to judge who is most fitted for the post.'

'I thank you,' said the cat. 'Well, what they have to do is this: To-night they must burrow under the walls of the castle and go up to the room where a Jew lies asleep. Somewhere about him he has hidden a stone, on which are engraved strange signs. When they have found it they must take it from him without his waking, and bring it to me.'

'Your orders shall be obeyed,' replied the rat. And he went out to give his instructions.

About midnight the cat, who was still sleeping before the gate, was awakened by some water flung at him by the head rat, who could not make up his mind to open the doors.

'Here is the stone you wanted,' said he, when the cat started up with a loud mew; 'if you will hold up your paws I will drop it down.' And so he did. 'And now farewell,' continued the rat; 'you have a long way to go, and will do well to start before daybreak.'

'Your counsel is good,' replied the cat, smiling to itself;

and putting the stone in her mouth she went off to seek the falcon.

Now all this time neither the cat nor the falcon had had any food, and the falcon soon got tired carrying such a heavy burden. When night arrived he declared he could go no further, but would spend it on the banks of a river.

'And it is my turn to take care of the stone,' said he, 'or it will seem as if you had done everything and I nothing.'

'No, I got it, and I will keep it,' answered the cat, who was tired and cross; and they began a fine quarrel. But, unluckily, in the midst of it, the cat raised her voice, and the stone fell into the ear of a big fish which happened to be swimming by, and though both the cat and the falcon sprang into the water after it, they were too late.

Half drowned, and more than half choked, the two faithful servants scrambled back to land again. The falcon flew to a tree and spread his wings in the sun to dry, but the cat, after giving herself a good shake, began to scratch up the sandy banks and to throw the bits into the stream.

'What are you doing that for?' asked a little fish. 'Do you know that you are making the water quite muddy?'

'That doesn't matter at all to me,' answered the cat. 'I am going to fill up all the river, so that the fishes may die.'

'That is very unkind, as we have never done you any harm,' replied the fish. 'Why are you so angry with us?'

'Because one of you has got a stone of mine — a stone with strange signs upon it — which dropped into the water. If you will promise to get it back for me, why, perhaps I will leave your river alone.'

'I will certainly try,' answered the fish in a great hurry; 'but you must have a little patience, as it may not

be an easy task.' And in an instant his scales might be seen flashing quickly along.

The fish swam as fast as he could to the sea, which was not far distant, and calling together all his relations who lived in the neighbourhood, he told them of the terrible danger which threatened the dwellers in the river.

'None of us has got it,' said the fishes, shaking their heads; 'but in the bay yonder there is a tunny who,



although he is so old, always goes everywhere. He will be able to tell you about it, if anyone can.' So the little fish swam off to the tunny, and again related his story.

'Why *I* was up that river only a few hours ago!' cried the tunny; 'and as *I* was coming back something fell into my ear, and there it is still, for *I* went to sleep when *I* got home and forgot all about it. Perhaps it may be what you want.' And stretching up his tail he whisked out the stone.

‘Yes, I think that must be it,’ said the fish with joy. And taking the stone in his mouth he carried it to the place where the cat was waiting for him.

‘I am much obliged to you,’ said the cat, as the fish laid the stone on the sand, ‘and to reward you, I will let your river alone.’ And she mounted the falcon’s back, and they flew to their master.

Ah, how glad he was to see them again with the magic stone in their possession. In a moment he had wished for a palace, but *this* time it was of green marble; and then he wished for the princess and her ladies to occupy it. And there they lived for many years, and when the old king died the princess’s husband reigned in his stead.

(Adapted from *Contes Berbères*.)

THE ADVENTURES OF A JACKAL

IN a country which is full of wild beasts of all sorts there once lived a jackal and a hedgehog, and, unlike though they were, the two animals made great friends, and were often seen in each other's company.

One afternoon they were walking along a road together, when the jackal, who was the taller of the two, exclaimed:

‘Oh! there is a barn full of corn; let us go and eat some.’

‘Yes, do let us!’ answered the hedgehog. So they went to the barn, and ate till they could eat no more. Then the jackal put on his shoes, which he had taken off so as to make no noise, and they returned to the high road.

After they had gone some way they met a panther, who stopped, and bowing politely, said:

‘Excuse my speaking to you, but I cannot help admiring those shoes of yours. Do you mind telling me who made them?’

‘Yes, I think they *are* rather nice,’ answered the jackal; ‘I made them myself, though.’

‘Could you make me a pair like them?’ asked the panther eagerly.

‘I would do my best, of course,’ replied the jackal; ‘but you must kill me a cow, and when we have eaten the flesh I will take the skin and make your shoes out of it.’

So the panther prowled about until he saw a fine

cow grazing apart from the rest of the herd. He killed it instantly, and then gave a cry to the jackal and hedgehog to come to the place where he was. They soon skinned the dead beast, and spread its skin out to dry, after which they had a grand feast before they curled themselves up for the night, and slept soundly.

Next morning the jackal got up early and set to work upon the shoes, while the panther sat by and looked on with delight. At last they were finished, and the jackal arose and stretched himself.

‘Now go and lay them in the sun out there,’ said he; ‘in a couple of hours they will be ready to put on; but do not attempt to wear them before, or you will feel them most uncomfortable. But I see the sun is high in the heavens, and we must be continuing our journey.’

The panther, who always believed what everybody told him, did exactly as he was bid, and in two hours’ time began to fasten on the shoes. They certainly set off his paws wonderfully, and he stretched out his fore-paws and looked at them with pride. But when he tried to *walk* — ah! that was another story! They were so stiff and hard that he nearly shrieked every step he took, and at last he sank down where he was, and actually began to cry.

After some time some little partridges who were hopping about heard the poor panther’s groans, and went up to see what was the matter. He had never tried to make his dinner off *them*, and they had always been quite friendly.

‘You seem in pain,’ said one of them, fluttering close to him, ‘can we help you?’

‘Oh, it is the jackal!’ He made me these shoes; they are so hard and tight that they hurt my feet, and I cannot manage to kick them off.’

‘Lie still, and we will soften them,’ answered the kind little partridge. And calling to his brothers, they all flew to the nearest spring, and carried water in their beaks,

which they poured over the shoes. This they did till the hard leather grew soft, and the panther was able to slip his feet out of them.

‘Oh, thank you, thank you,’ he cried, skipping round with joy. ‘I feel a different creature. Now I will go after the jackal and pay him my debts.’ And he bounded away into the forest.

But the jackal had been very cunning, and had trotted backwards and forwards and in and out, so that it was very difficult to know which track he had really followed. At length, however, he caught sight of his enemy, at the same moment that the jackal had caught sight of him. The panther gave a loud roar, and sprung forward, but the jackal was too quick for him and plunged into a dense thicket, where the panther could not follow.

Disgusted with his failure, but more angry than ever, the panther lay down for a while to consider what he should do next, and as he was thinking, an old man came by.

‘Oh! father, tell me how I can repay the jackal for the way he has served me!’ And without more ado he told his story.

‘If you take my advice,’ answered the old man, ‘you will kill a cow, and invite all the jackals in the forest to the feast. Watch them carefully while they are eating, and you will see that most of them keep their eyes on their food. But if one of them glances at *you*, you will know that is the traitor.’

The panther, whose manners were always good, thanked the old man, and followed his counsel. The cow was killed, and the partridges flew about with invitations to the jackals, who gathered in large numbers to the feast. The wicked jackal came amongst them; but as the panther had only seen him once he could not distinguish him from the rest. However, they all took their places on wooden seats placed round the dead cow,

which was laid across the boughs of a fallen tree, and began their dinner, each jackal fixing his eyes greedily on the piece of meat before him. Only one of them seemed uneasy, and every now and then glanced in the direction of his host. This the panther noticed, and suddenly made a bound at the culprit and seized his tail; but again the jackal was too quick for him, and catching up a knife he cut off his tail and darted into the forest, followed by all the rest of the party. And before the panther had recovered from his surprise he found himself alone.

‘What am I to do *now?*’ he asked the old man, who soon came back to see how things had turned out.

‘It is very unfortunate, certainly,’ answered he; ‘but I think I know where you can find him. There is a melon garden about two miles from here, and as jackals are very fond of melons they are nearly sure to have gone there to feed. If you see a tailless jackal you will know that he is the one you want.’ So the panther thanked him and went his way.

Now the jackal had guessed what advice the old man would give his enemy, and so, while his friends were greedily eating the ripest melons in the sunniest corner of the garden, he stole behind them and tied their tails together. He had only just finished when his ears caught the sound of breaking branches; and he cried: ‘Quick! quick! here comes the master of the garden!’ And the jackals sprang up and ran away in all directions, leaving their tails behind them. And how was the panther to know which was his enemy?

‘They none of them had any tails,’ he said sadly to the old man, ‘and I am tired of hunting them. I shall leave them alone and go and catch something for supper.’

Of course the hedgehog had not been able to take part in any of these adventures; but as soon as all danger

was over, the jackal went to look for his friend whom he was lucky enough to find at home.

‘Ah, there you are,’ he said gaily. ‘I have lost my tail since I saw you last. And other people have lost theirs too; but that is no matter! I am hungry, so come with me to the shepherd who is sitting over there, and we will ask him to sell us one of his sheep.’

‘Yes, that is a good plan,’ answered the hedgehog. And he walked as fast as his little legs would go to keep up with the jackal. When they reached the shepherd the jackal pulled out his purse from under his foreleg, and made his bargain.

‘Only wait till to-morrow,’ said the shepherd, ‘and I will give you the biggest sheep you ever saw. But he always feeds at some distance from the rest of the flock, and it would take me a long time to catch him.’

‘Well, it is very tiresome, but I suppose I must wait,’ replied the jackal. And he and the hedgehog looked about for a nice dry cave in which to make themselves comfortable for the night. But, after they had gone, the shepherd killed one of his sheep, and stripped off his skin, which he sewed tightly round a greyhound he had with him, and put a cord round its neck. Then he lay down and went to sleep.

Very, very early, before the sun was properly up, the jackal and the hedgehog were pulling at the shepherd’s cloak.

‘Wake up,’ they said, ‘and give us that sheep. We have had nothing to eat all night, and are very hungry.’

The shepherd yawned, and rubbed his eyes. ‘He is tied up to that tree; go and take him.’ So they went to the tree and unfastened the cord, and turned to go back to the cave where they had slept, dragging the greyhound after them. When they reached the cave the jackal said to the hedgehog:

‘Before I kill him let me see whether he is fat or thin.’ And he stood a little way back, so that he might

the better examine the animal. After looking at him, with his head on one side, for a minute or two, he nodded gravely.

‘He is quite fat enough; he is a good sheep.’

But the hedgehog, who sometimes showed more cunning than anyone would have guessed, answered:

‘My friend, you are talking nonsense. The wool is indeed a sheep’s wool, but the paws of my uncle the greyhound peep out from underneath.’

‘He is a *sheep*,’ repeated the jackal, who did not like to think anyone cleverer than himself.

‘Hold the cord while *I* look at him,’ answered the hedgehog.

Very unwillingly the jackal held the rope, while the hedgehog walked slowly round the greyhound till he reached the jackal again. He knew quite well by the paws and tail that it was a greyhound and not a sheep, that the shepherd had sold them; and as he could not tell what turn affairs might take, he resolved to get out of the way.

‘Oh! yes, you are right,’ he said to the jackal; ‘but I never can eat till I have first drunk. I will just go and quench my thirst from that spring at the edge of the wood, and then I shall be ready for breakfast.’

‘Don’t be long, then,’ called the jackal, as the hedgehog hurried off at his best pace. And he lay down under a rock to wait for him.

More than an hour passed by and the hedgehog had had plenty of time to go to the spring and back, and still there was no sign of him. And this was very natural, as he had hidden himself in some long grass under a tree!

At length the jackal guessed that for some reason his friend had run away, and determined to wait for his breakfast no longer. So he went up to the place where the greyhound had been tethered and untied the rope. But just as he was about to spring on his back and give

him a deadly bite, the jackal heard a low growl, which never proceeded from the throat of any sheep. Like a flash of lightning the jackal threw down the cord and was flying across the plain; but though his legs were long, the greyhound's legs were longer still, and he soon came up with his prey. The jackal turned to fight, but he was no match for the greyhound, and in a few minutes he was lying dead on the ground, while the greyhound was trotting peacefully back to the shepherd.

(*Nouveaux Contes Berbères* par René Bassel.)

THE ADVENTURES OF THE JACKAL'S ELDEST SON

Now, though the jackal was dead, he had left two sons behind him, every whit as cunning and tricky as their father. The elder of the two was a fine handsome creature, who had a pleasant manner and made many friends. The animal he saw most of was a hyena; and one day, when they were taking a walk together, they picked up a beautiful green cloak, which had evidently been dropped by some one riding across the plain on a camel. Of course each wanted to have it, and they almost quarrelled over the matter; but at length it was settled that the hyena should wear the cloak by day and the jackal by night. After a little while, however, the jackal became discontented with this arrangement, declaring that none of his friends, who were quite different from those of the hyena, could see the splendour of the mantle, and that it was only fair that he should sometimes be allowed to wear it by day. To this the hyena would by no means consent, and they were on the eve of a quarrel when the hyena proposed that they should ask the lion to judge between them. The jackal agreed to this, and the hyena wrapped the cloak about him, and they both trotted off to the lion's den.

The jackal, who was fond of talking, at once told the story; and when it was finished the lion turned to the hyena and asked if it was true.

‘Quite true, your majesty,’ answered the hyena.

‘Then lay the cloak on the ground at my feet,’ said the lion, ‘and I will give my judgment.’ So the mantle

was spread upon the red earth, the hyena and the jackal standing on each side of it.

There was silence for a few moments, and then the lion sat up, looking very great and wise.

'My judgment is that the garment shall belong wholly to whoever first rings the bell of the nearest mosque at dawn to-morrow. Now go; for much business awaits me!'

All that night the hyena sat up, fearing lest the jackal should reach the bell before him, for the mosque was close at hand. With the first streak of dawn he bounded away to the bell, just as the jackal, who had slept soundly all night, was rising to his feet.

'Good luck to you,' cried the jackal. And throwing the cloak over his back he darted away across the plain, and was seen no more by his friend the hyena.

After running several miles the jackal thought he was safe from pursuit, and seeing a lion and another hyena talking together, he strolled up to join them.

'Good morning,' he said; 'may I ask what is the matter? You seem very serious about something.'

'Pray sit down,' answered the lion. 'We were wondering in which direction we should go to find the best dinner. The hyena wishes to go to the forest, and I to the mountains. What do you say?'

'Well, as I was sauntering over the plain, just now, I noticed a flock of sheep grazing, and some of them had wandered into a little valley quite out of sight of the shepherd. If you keep among the rocks you will never be observed. But perhaps you will allow me to go with you and show you the way?'

'You are really very kind,' answered the lion. And they crept stealthily along till at length they reached the mouth of the valley where a ram, a sheep and a lamb were feeding on the rich grass, unconscious of their danger.

'How shall we divide them?' asked the lion in a whisper to the hyena.

'Oh, it is easily done,' replied the hyena. 'The lamb for me, the sheep for the jackal, and the ram for the lion.'

'So I am to have that lean creature, which is nothing but horns, am I?' cried the lion in a rage. 'I will teach you to divide things in that manner!' And he gave the hyena two great blows, which stretched him dead in a moment. Then he turned to the jackal and said: 'How would you divide them?'

'Quite differently from the hyena,' replied the jackal. 'You will breakfast off the lamb, you will dine off the sheep, and you will sup off the ram.'

'Dear me, how clever you are! Who taught you such wisdom?' exclaimed the lion, looking at him admiringly.

'The fate of the hyena,' answered the jackal, laughing, and running off at his best speed; for he saw two men armed with spears coming close behind the lion!

The jackal continued to run till at last he could run no longer. He flung himself under a tree panting for breath, when he heard a rustle amongst the grass, and his father's old friend the hedgehog appeared before him.

'Oh, is it you?' asked the little creature; 'how strange that we should meet so far from home!'

'I have just had a narrow escape of my life,' gasped the jackal, 'and I need some sleep. After that we must think of something to do to amuse ourselves.' And he lay down again and slept soundly for a couple of hours.

'Now I am ready,' said he; 'have you anything to propose?'

'In a valley beyond those trees,' answered the hedgehog, 'there is a small farm-house where the best butter in the world is made. I know their ways, and in an hour's time the farmer's wife will be off to milk the cows, which she keeps at some distance. We could easily get in at the window of the shed where she keeps the butter,

and I will watch, lest some one should come unexpectedly, while you have a good meal. Then you shall watch, and I will eat.'

'That sounds a good plan,' replied the jackal; and they set off together.

But when they reached the farm-house the jackal said to the hedgehog: 'Go in and fetch the pots of butter, and I will hide them in a safe place.'

'Oh no,' cried the hedgehog, 'I really couldn't. They would find out directly! And, besides, it is so different just eating a little now and then.'

'Do as I bid you *at once*,' said the jackal, looking at the hedgehog so sternly that the little fellow dared say no more, and soon rolled the jars to the window where the jackal lifted them out one by one.

When they were all in a row before him he gave a sudden start.

'Run for your life,' he whispered to his companion; 'I see the woman coming over the hill!' And the hedgehog, his heart beating, set off as fast as he could. The jackal remained where he was, shaking with laughter, for the woman was not in sight at all, and he had only sent the hedgehog away because he did not want him to know where the jars of butter were buried. But every day he stole out to their hiding-place and had a delicious feast.

At length, one morning, the hedgehog suddenly said:

'You never told me what you did with those jars?'

'Oh, I hid them safely till the farm people should have forgotten all about them,' replied the jackal. 'But as they are still searching for them we must wait a little longer, and then I'll bring them home, and we will share them between us.'

So the hedgehog waited and waited; but every time he asked if there was no chance of getting the jars of butter the jackal put him off with some excuse. After a while the hedgehog became suspicious, and said:

'I should like to know where you have hidden them.'

To-night, when it is quite dark, you shall show me the place.'

'I really *can't* tell you,' answered the jackal. 'You talk so much that you would be sure to confide the secret to somebody, and then we should have had our trouble for nothing, besides running the risk of our necks being broken by the farmer. I can see that he is getting disheartened, and very soon he will give up the search. Have patience just a little longer.'

The hedgehog said no more, and pretended to be satisfied; but when some days had gone by he woke the jackal, who was sleeping soundly after a hunt which had lasted several hours.

'I have just had notice,' remarked the hedgehog, shaking him, 'that my family wish to have a banquet to-morrow, and they have invited you to it. Will you come?'

'Certainly,' answered the jackal, 'with pleasure. But as I have to go out in the morning you can meet me on the road.'

'That will do very well,' replied the hedgehog. And the jackal went to sleep again, for he was obliged to be up early.

Punctual to the moment the hedgehog arrived at the place appointed for their meeting, and as the jackal was not there he sat down and waited for him.

'Ah, there you are!' he cried, when the dusky yellow form at last turned the corner. 'I had nearly given you up! Indeed, I almost wish you had not come, for I hardly know where I shall hide you.'

'Why should you hide me anywhere?' asked the jackal. 'What is the matter with you?'

'Well, so many of the guests have brought their dogs and mules with them, that I fear it may hardly be safe for you to go amongst them. No; don't run off that way,' he added quickly, 'because there is another troop that are coming over the hill. Lie down here, and I will

throw these sacks over you; and keep still for your life, whatever happens.'

And what did happen was, that when the jackal was lying covered up, under a little hill, the hedgehog set a great stone rolling, which crushed him to death.

(Contes Berbères.)

THE ADVENTURES OF THE YOUNGER SON OF THE JACKAL

Now that the father and elder brother were both dead, all that was left of the jackal family was one son, who was no less cunning than the others had been. He did not like staying in the same place any better than they, and nobody ever knew in what part of the country he might be found next.

One day, when he was wandering about he beheld a nice fat sheep, which was cropping the grass and seemed quite contented with her lot.

‘Good morning,’ said the jackal, ‘I am so glad to see you. I have been looking for you everywhere.’

‘For *me*?’ answered the sheep, in an astonished voice; ‘but we have never met before!’

‘No; but I have *heard* of you. ‘Oh! you don’t know *what* fine things I have heard! Ah, well, some people have all the luck!’

‘You are very kind, I am sure,’ answered the sheep, not knowing which way to look. ‘Is there any way in which I can help you?’

‘There *is* something that I had set my heart on, though I hardly like to propose it on so short an acquaintance; but from what people have told me, I thought that you and I might keep house together comfortably, if you would only agree to try. I have several fields belonging to me, and if they are kept well watered they bear wonderful crops.’

'Perhaps I might come for a short time,' said the sheep, with a little hesitation; 'and if we do not get on, we can but part company.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you,' cried the jackal; 'do not let us lose a moment.' And he held out his paw in such an inviting manner that the sheep got up and trotted beside him till they reached home.

'Now,' said the jackal, 'you go to the well and fetch the water, and I will pour it into the trenches that run between the patches of corn.' And as he did so he sang lustily. The work was very hard, but the sheep did not grumble, and by-and-by was rewarded at seeing the little green heads poking themselves through earth. After that the hot sun ripened them quickly, and soon harvest time was come. Then the grain was cut and ground and ready for sale.

When everything was complete, the jackal said to the sheep:

'Now let us divide it, so that we can each do what we like with his share.'

'You do it,' answered the sheep; 'here are the scales. You must weigh it carefully.'

So the jackal began to weigh it, and when he had finished, he counted out loud:

'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven parts for the jackal, and one part for the sheep. If she likes it she can take it, if not, she can leave it.'

The sheep looked at the two heaps in silence—one so large, the other so small; and then she answered:

'Wait for a minute, while I fetch some sacks to carry away my share.'

But it was not sacks that the sheep wanted; for as soon as the jackal could no longer see her she set forth at her best pace for the home of the greyhound, where she arrived panting with the haste she had made.

'Oh, good uncle, help me, I pray you!' she cried, as soon as she could speak.

‘Why, what is the matter?’ asked the greyhound, looking up in astonishment.

‘I beg you to return with me, and frighten the jackal into paying me what he owes me,’ answered the sheep. ‘For months we have lived together, and I have twice every day drawn the water, while he only poured it into the trenches. Together we have reaped our harvest; and now, when the moment to divide our crop has come, he has taken seven parts for himself, and only left one for me.’

She finished, and giving herself a twist, passed her woolly tail across her eyes; while the greyhound watched her, but held his peace. Then he said:

‘Bring me a sack.’ And the sheep hastened away to fetch one. Very soon she returned, and laid the sack down before him.

‘Open it wide, that I may get in,’ cried he; and when he was comfortably rolled up inside he bade the sheep take him on her back, and hasten to the place where she had left the jackal.

She found him waiting for her, and pretending to be asleep, though she clearly saw him wink one of his eyes. However, she took no notice, but throwing the sack roughly on the ground, she exclaimed:

‘Now measure!’

At this the jackal got up, and going to the heap of grain which lay close by, he divided it as before into eight portions — seven for himself and one for the sheep.

‘What are you doing that for?’ asked she indignantly. ‘You know quite well that it was I who drew the water, and you who only poured it into the trenches.’

‘You are mistaken,’ answered the jackal. ‘It was *I* who drew the water, and *you* who poured it into the trenches. Anybody will tell you that! If you like, I will ask those people who are digging there.’

‘Very well,’ replied the sheep. And the jackal called out:

'Ho! you diggers, tell me: Who was it you heard singing over the work?'

'Why, it was you, of course, jackal! You sang so loud that the whole world might have heard you!'

'And who is it that sings—he who draws the water, or he who empties it?'

'Why, certainly he who draws the water!'

'You hear?' said the jackal, turning to the sheep. Now come and carry away your own portion, or else I shall take it for myself.'

'You have got the better of me,' answered the sheep; 'and I suppose I must confess myself beaten! But as I bear no malice, go and eat some of the dates that I have brought in that sack.' And the jackal, who loved dates, ran instantly back, and tore open the mouth of the sack. But just as he was about to plunge his nose in he saw two brown eyes calmly looking at him. In an instant he had let fall the flap of the sack and bounded back to where the sheep was standing.

'I was only in fun; and you have brought my uncle the greyhound. Take away the sack, we will make the division over again.' And he began re-arranging the heaps.

'One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, for my mother the sheep, and one for the jackal,' counted he; casting timid glances all the while at the sack.

'Now you can take your share and go,' said the sheep. And the jackal did not need twice telling! Whenever the sheep looked up, she still saw him flying, flying across the plain; and, for all I know, he may be flying across it still.

(Contes Berbères, par René Basset.)

THE ROVER OF THE PLAIN

A LONG way off, near the sea coast of the east of Africa, there dwelt, once upon a time, a man and his wife. They had two children, a son and a daughter, whom they loved very much, and, like parents in other countries, they often talked of the fine marriages the young people would make some day. Out there both boys and girls marry early, and very soon, it seemed to the mother, a message was sent by a rich man on the other side of the great hills offering a fat herd of oxen in exchange for the daughter. Everyone in the house and in the village rejoiced, and the maiden was despatched to her new home. When all was quiet again the father said to his son:

‘Now that we own such a splendid troop of oxen you had better hasten and get yourself a wife, lest some illness should overtake them. Already we have seen in the villages round about one or two damsels whose parents would gladly part with them for less than half the herd. Therefore tell us which you like best, and we will buy her for you.’

But the son answered:

‘Not so; the maidens I have seen do not please me. If, indeed, I must marry, let me travel and find a wife for myself.’

‘It shall be as you wish,’ said his parents; ‘but if by-and-by trouble should come of it, it will be your fault and not ours.’

The youth, however, would not listen; and bidding his father and mother farewell, set out on his search.

Far, far away he wandered, over mountains and across rivers, till he reached a village where the people were quite different to those of his own race. As he glanced about him he noticed that the girls were fair to look upon, as they pounded maize or stewed something that smelt very nice in earthen pots—especially if you were hot and tired; and when one of the maidens turned round and offered the stranger some dinner, he made up his mind that he would wed her and nobody else.

So he sent a message to her parents asking their leave to take her for his wife, and they came next day to bring their answer.

‘We will give you our daughter,’ said they, ‘if you can pay a good price for her. Never was there so hard-working a girl; and how we shall do without her we cannot tell! Still no doubt your father and mother will come themselves and bring the dowry?’

‘No; I have the dowry with me,’ replied the young man; laying down a handful of gold pieces. ‘Here it is — take it.’

The old couple’s eyes glittered greedily; but custom forbade them to touch the dowry before all was arranged.

‘At least,’ said they, after a moment’s pause, ‘we may expect them to fetch your wife to her new home?’

‘No; they are not used to travelling,’ answered the bridegroom. ‘Let the ceremony be performed without delay, and we will set forth at once. It is a long journey.’

Then the parents called in the girl, who was lying in the sun outside the hut, and, in the presence of all the village, a goat was killed, the sacred dance took place, and a blessing was said over the heads of the young people. After that the bride was led aside by her father, whose duty it was to bestow on her some parting advice as to her conduct in her married life.

‘Be good to your husband’s parents,’ added he, ‘and always do the will of your husband.’ And the girl

nodded her head obediently. Next it was the mother's turn; and, as was the custom of the tribe, she spoke to her daughter:

'Will you choose which of your sisters shall go with you to cut your wood and carry your water?'

'I do not want any of them,' answered she; 'they are no use. They will drop the wood and spill the water.'

'Then will you have any of the other children? There are enough and to spare,' asked the mother again. But the bride said quickly:

'I will have none of them! You must give me our buffalo, the Rover of the Plain; he alone shall serve me.'

'What folly you talk!' cried the parents. 'Give you our buffalo, the Rover of the Plain? Why, you know that our life depends on him. Here he is well fed and lies on soft grass; but how can you tell what will befall him in another country? The food may be bad, he will die of hunger; and, if he dies we die also.'

'No, no,' said the bride; 'I can look after him as well as you. Get him ready, for the sun is sinking and it is time we set forth.'

So she went away and put together a small pot filled with healing herbs, a horn that she used in tending sick people, a little knife, and a calabash containing deer fat; and, hiding these about her, took leave of her father and mother and started across the mountains by the side of her husband.

But the young man did not see the buffalo that followed them, which had left his home to be the servant of his wife.

No one ever knew how the news spread to the kraal that the young man was coming back, bringing a wife with him; but, somehow or other, when the two entered the village, every man and woman was standing in the road uttering shouts of welcome.

'Ah, you are not dead after all,' cried they; 'and have found a wife to your liking, though you would have none of our girls. Well, well, you have chosen your own path; and if ill comes of it beware lest you grumble.'

Next day the husband took his wife to the fields and showed her which were his, and which belonged to his mother. The girl listened carefully to all he told her,



THE ROVER OF THE PLAIN DOES THE GIRL'S WORK

and walked with him back to the hut; but close to the door she stopped, and said:

'I have dropped my necklace of beads in the field, and I must go back and look for it.' But in truth she had done nothing of the sort, and it was only an excuse to go and seek the buffalo.

The beast was crouching under a tree when she came up, and snorted with pleasure at the sight of her.

'You can roam about this field, and this, and this,' she said, 'for they belong to my husband; and that is

his wood, where you may hide yourself. But the other fields are his mother's, so beware lest you touch them.'

'I will beware,' answered the buffalo; and, patting his head, the girl left him.

Oh, how much better a servant he was than any of the little girls the bride had refused to bring with her! If she wanted water, she had only to cross the patch of maize behind the hut and seek out the place where the buffalo lay hidden, and put down her pail beside him. Then she would sit at her ease while he went to the lake and brought the bucket back brimming over. If she wanted wood, he would break the branches off the trees and lay them at her feet. And the villagers watched her return laden, and said to each other:

'Surely the girls of her country are stronger than our girls, for none of *them* could cut so quickly or carry so much!' But then, nobody knew that she had a buffalo for a servant.

Only, all this time she never gave the poor buffalo anything to eat, because she had just one dish, out of which she and her husband ate; while in her old home there was a dish put aside expressly for the Rover of the Plain. The buffalo bore it as long as he could; but, one day, when his mistress bade him go to the lake and fetch water, his knees almost gave way from hunger. He kept silence, however, till the evening, when he said to his mistress:

'I am nearly starved; I have not touched food since I came here. I can work no more.'

'Alas!' answered she, 'what can I do? I have only one dish in the house. You will have to steal some beans from the fields. Take a few here and a few there; but be sure not to take too many from one place, or the owner may notice it.'

Now the buffalo had always lived an honest life, but if his mistress did not feed him, he must get it for himself. So that night, when all the village was asleep, he came

out from the wood and ate a few beans here and a few there, as his mistress had bidden him. And when at last his hunger was satisfied, he crept back to his lair. But a buffalo is not a fairy, and the next morning, when the women arrived to work in the fields, they stood still with astonishment, and said to each other:

‘Just look at this; a savage beast has been destroying our crops, and we can see traces of his feet!’ And they hurried to their homes to tell their tale.

In the evening the girl crept out to the buffalo’s hiding-place, and said to him:

‘They perceived what happened, of course; so to-night you had better seek your supper further off.’ And the buffalo nodded his head and followed her counsel; but in the morning, when these women also went out to work, the traces of hoofs were plainly to be seen, and they hastened to tell their husbands, and begged them to bring their guns, and to watch for the robber.

It happened that the stranger girl’s husband was the best marksman in all the village, and he hid himself behind the trunk of a tree and waited.

The buffalo, thinking that they would probably make a search for him in the fields he had laid waste the evening before, returned to the bean patch belonging to his mistress.

The young man saw him coming with amazement.

‘Why, it is a buffalo!’ cried he; ‘I never have beheld one in this country before!’ And raising his gun, he aimed just behind the ear.

The buffalo gave a leap into the air, and then fell dead.

‘It was a good shot,’ said the young man. And he ran to the village to tell them that the thief was punished.

When he entered his hut he found his wife, who had somehow heard the news, twisting herself to and fro and shedding tears.

'Are you ill?' asked he. And she answered: 'Yes; I have pains all over my body.' But she was not ill at all, only very unhappy at the death of the buffalo which had served her so well. Her husband felt anxious, and sent for the medicine man; but though she pretended to listen to him, she threw all his medicine out of the door directly he had gone away.

With the first rays of light the whole village was awake, and the women set forth armed with baskets and the men with knives in order to cut up the buffalo. Only the girl remained in her hut; and after a while she too went to join them, groaning and weeping as she walked along.

'What are you doing here?' asked her husband when he saw her. 'If you are ill you are better at home.'

'Oh! I could not stay alone in the village,' said she. And her mother-in-law left off her work to come and scold her, and to tell her that she would kill herself if she did such foolish things. But the girl would not listen and sat down and looked on.

When they had divided the buffalo's flesh, and each woman had the family portion in her basket, the stranger wife got up and said:

'Let me have the head.'

'You could never carry anything so heavy,' answered the men, 'and now you are ill besides.'

'You do not know how strong I am,' answered she. And at last they gave it her.

She did not walk to the village with the others, but lingered behind, and, instead of entering her hut, she slipped into the little shed where the pots for cooking and storing maize were kept. Then she laid down the buffalo's head and sat beside it. Her husband came to seek her, and begged her to leave the shed and go to bed, as she must be tired out; but the girl would not stir, neither would she attend to the words of her mother-in-law.

'I wish you would leave me alone!' she answered crossly. 'It is impossible to sleep if somebody is always coming in.' And she turned her back on them, and



would not even eat the food they had brought. So they went away, and the young man soon stretched himself out on his mat; but his wife's odd conduct made him anxious, and he lay awake all night, listening.

When all was still the girl made a fire and boiled some water in a pot. As soon as it was quite hot she shook in the medicine that she had brought from home, and then, taking the buffalo's head, she made incisions with her little knife behind the ear, and close to the temple where the shot had struck him. Next she applied the horn to the spot and blew with all her force till, at length, the blood began to move. After that she spread some of the deer fat out of the calabash over the wound, which she held in the steam of the hot water. Last of all, she sang in a low voice a dirge over the Rover of the Plain.

As she chanted the final words the head moved, and the limbs came back. The buffalo began to feel alive again and shook his horns, and stood up and stretched himself. Unluckily it was just at this moment that the husband said to himself:

'I wonder if she is crying still, and what is the matter with her! Perhaps I had better go and see.' And he got up and, calling her by name, went out to the shed.

'Go away! I don't want you!' she cried angrily. But it was too late. The buffalo had fallen to the ground, dead, and with the wound in his head as before.

The young man who, unlike most of his tribe, was afraid of his wife, returned to his bed without having seen anything, but wondering very much what she could be doing all this time. After waiting a few minutes, she began her task over again, and at the end the buffalo stood on his feet as before. But just as the girl was rejoicing that her work was completed, in came the husband once more to see what his wife was doing; and this time he sat himself down in the hut, and said that he wished to watch whatever was going on. Then the girl took up the pitcher and all her other things and left the shed, trying for the third time to bring the buffalo back to life.

She was too late; the dawn was already breaking,

and the head fell to the ground, dead and corrupt as it was before.

The girl entered the hut, where her husband and his mother were getting ready to go out.

‘I want to go down to the lake, and bathe,’ said she.

‘But you could never walk so far,’ answered they.
‘You are so tired, as it is, that you can hardly stand!’

However, in spite of their warnings, the girl left the hut in the direction of the lake. Very soon she came back weeping, and sobbed out:

‘I met some one in the village who lives in my country, and he told me that my mother is very, very ill, and if I do not go to her at once she will be dead before I arrive. I will return as soon as I can, and now farewell.’ And she set forth in the direction of the mountains. But this story was not true; she knew nothing about her mother, only she wanted an excuse to go home and tell her family that their prophecies had come true, and that the buffalo was dead.

Balancing her basket on her head, she walked along, and directly she had left the village behind her she broke out into the song of the Rover of the Plain, and at last, at the end of the day, she came to the group of huts where her parents lived. Her friends all ran to meet her, and, weeping, she told them that the buffalo was dead.

This sad news spread like lightning through the country, and the people flocked from far and near to bewail the loss of the beast who had been their pride.

‘If you only had listened to *us*,’ they cried, ‘he would be alive now. But you refused all the little girls we offered you, and would have nothing but the buffalo. And remember what the medicine-man said: “If the buffalo dies you die also!”’

So they bewailed their fate, one to the other, and for a while they did not perceive that the girl’s husband was sitting in their midst, leaning his gun against a tree. Then one man, turning, beheld him, and bowed mockingly.

‘Hail, murderer! hail! you have slain us all!’

The young man stared, not knowing what he meant, and answered, wonderingly:

‘I shot a buffalo; is that why you call me a murderer?’

‘A buffalo — yes; but the servant of your wife! It was he who carried the wood and drew the water. Did you not know it?’

‘No; I did not know it,’ replied the husband in surprise. ‘Why did no one tell me? Of course I should not have shot him!’

‘Well, he is dead,’ answered they, ‘and we must die too.’

At this the girl took a cup in which some poisonous herbs had been crushed, and holding it in her hands, she wailed: ‘O my father, Rover of the Plain!’ Then drinking a deep draught from it, fell back dead. One by one her parents, her brothers and her sisters, drank also and died, singing a dirge to the memory of the buffalo.

The girl’s husband looked on with horror; and returned sadly home across the mountains, and, entering his hut, threw himself on the ground. At first he was too tired to speak; but at length he raised his head and told all the story to his father and mother, who sat watching him. When he had finished they shook their heads and said:

‘Now you see that we spoke no idle words when we told you that ill would come of your marriage! We offered you a good and hard-working wife, and you would have none of her. And it is not only your wife you have lost, but your fortune also. For who will give you back your dowry if they are all dead?’

‘It is true, O my father,’ answered the young man. But in his heart he thought more of the loss of his wife than of the money he had given for her.



THE
OLIVE FAIRY BOOK

EDITED BY
ANDREW LANG



WITH EIGHT COLOURED PLATES AND
NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. J. FORD

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SAMBA THE COWARD

IN the great country far away south, through which flows the river Nile, there lived a king who had an only child called Samba.

Now, from the time that Samba could walk he showed signs of being afraid of everything, and as he grew bigger he became more and more frightened. At first his father's friends made light of it, and said to each other :

‘It is strange to see a boy of our race running into a hut at the trumpeting of an elephant, and trembling with fear if a lion cub half his size comes near him ; but, after all, he is only a baby, and when he is older he will be as brave as the rest.’

‘Yes, he is only a baby,’ answered the king who overheard them, ‘it will be all right by-and-by.’ But, somehow, he sighed as he said it, and the men looked at him and made no reply.

The years passed away, and Samba had become a tall and strong youth. He was good-natured and pleasant, and was liked by all, and if during his father's hunting parties he was seldom to be seen in any place of danger, he was too great a favourite for much to be said.

‘When the king holds the feast and declares him to be his heir, he will cease to be a child,’ murmured the rest of the people, as they had done before ; and on the day of the ceremony their hearts beat gladly, and they cried to each other :

‘It is Samba, Samba, whose chin is above the heads

of other men, who will defend us against the tribes of the robbers !'

Not many weeks after, the dwellers in the village awoke to find that during the night their herds had been driven away, and their herdsmen carried off into slavery by their enemies. Now was the time for Samba to show the brave spirit that had come to him with his manhood, and to ride forth at the head of the warriors of his race. But Samba could nowhere be found, and a party of the avengers went on their way without him.

It was many days later before he came back, with his head held high, and a tale of a lion which he had tracked to its lair and killed, at the risk of his own life. A little while earlier and his people would have welcomed his story, and believed it all, but now it was too late.

'Samba the Coward,' cried a voice from the crowd ; and the name stuck to him, even the very children shouted it at him, and his father did not spare him. At length he could bear it no longer, and made up his mind to leave his own land for another where peace had reigned since the memory of man. So, early next morning, he slipped out to the king's stables, and choosing the quietest horse he could find, he rode away northwards.

Never as long as he lived did Samba forget the terrors of that journey. He could hardly sleep at night for dread of the wild beasts that might be lurking behind every rock or bush, while, by day, the distant roar of a lion would cause him to start so violently, that he almost fell from his horse. A dozen times he was on the point of turning back, and it was not the terror of the mocking words and scornful laughs that kept him from doing so, but the terror lest he should be forced to take part in their wars. Therefore he held on, and deeply thankful he felt when the walls of a city, larger than he had ever dreamed of, rose before him.

Drawing himself up to his full height, he rode proudly through the gate and past the palace, where, as was her custom, the princess was sitting on the terrace roof, watching the bustle in the street below.

‘That is a gallant figure,’ thought she, as Samba, mounted on his big black horse, steered his way skilfully among the crowds ; and, beckoning to a slave, she ordered him to go and meet the stranger, and ask him who he was and whence he came.

‘Oh, princess, he is the son of a king, and heir to a country which lies near the Great River,’ answered the slave, when he had returned from questioning Samba. And the princess on hearing this news summoned her father, and told him that if she was not allowed to wed the stranger she would die unmarried.

Like many other fathers, the king could refuse his daughter nothing, and besides, she had rejected so many suitors already that he was quite alarmed lest no man should be good enough for her. Therefore, after a talk with Samba, who charmed him by his good humour and pleasant ways, he gave his consent, and three days later the wedding feast was celebrated with the utmost splendour.

The princess was very proud of her tall handsome husband, and for some time she was quite content that he should pass the days with her under the palm trees, telling her the stories that she loved, or amusing her with tales of the manners and customs of his country, which were so different to those of her own. But, by-and-by, this was not enough ; she wanted other people to be proud of him too, and one day she said :

‘I really almost wish that those Moorish thieves from the north would come on one of their robbing expeditions. I should love so to see you ride out at the head of our men, to chase them home again. Ah, how happy I should be when the city rang with your noble deeds !’



SAMBA found skulking by his wife

She looked lovingly at him as she spoke ; but, to her surprise, his face grew dark, and he answered hastily :

‘ Never speak to me again of the Moors or of war. It was to escape from them that I fled from my own land, and at the first word of invasion I should leave you for ever.’

‘ How funny you are,’ cried she, breaking into a laugh. ‘ The idea of anyone as big as you being afraid of a Moor ! But still, you mustn’t say those things to anyone except me, or they might think you were in earnest.’

Not very long after this, when the people of the city were holding a great feast outside the walls of the town, a body of Moors, who had been in hiding for days, drove off all the sheep and goats which were peacefully feeding on the slopes of a hill. Directly the loss was discovered, which was not for some hours, the king gave orders that the war drum should be beaten, and the warriors assembled in the great square before the palace, trembling with fury at the insult which had been put upon them. Loud were the cries for instant vengeance, and for Samba, son-in-law of the king, to lead them to battle. But shout as they might, Samba never came.

And where was he ? No further than in a cool, dark cellar of the palace, crouching among huge earthenware pots of grain. With a rush of pain at her heart, there his wife found him, and she tried with all her strength to kindle in him a sense of shame, but in vain. Even the thought of the future danger he might run from the contempt of his subjects was as nothing when compared with the risks of the present.

‘ Take off your tunic of mail,’ said the princess at last ; and her voice was so stern and cold that none would have known it. ‘ Give it to me, and hand me besides your helmet, your sword and your spear.’ And

with many fearful glances to right and to left, Samba stripped off the armour inlaid with gold, the property of the king's son-in-law. Silently his wife took, one by one, the pieces from him, and fastened them on her with firm hands, never even glancing at the tall form of her husband who had slunk back to his corner. When she had fastened the last buckle, and lowered her vizor, she went out, and mounting Samba's horse, gave the signal to the warriors to follow.

Now, although the princess was much shorter than her husband, she was a tall woman, and the horse which she rode was likewise higher than the rest, so that when the men caught sight of the gold-inlaid suit of chain armour, they did not doubt that Samba was taking his rightful place, and cheered him loudly. The princess bowed in answer to their greeting, but kept her vizor down ; and touching her horse with the spur, she galloped at the head of her troops to charge the enemy. The Moors, who had not expected to be so quickly pursued, had scarcely time to form themselves into battle array, and were speedily put to flight. Then the little troop of horsemen returned to the city, where all sung the praises of Samba their leader.

The instant they reached the palace the princess flung her reins to a groom, and disappeared up a side staircase, by which she could, unseen, enter her own rooms. Here she found Samba lying idly on a heap of mats ; but he raised his head uneasily as the door opened and looked at his wife, not feeling sure how she might act towards him. However, he need not have been afraid of harsh words : she merely unbuttoned her armour as fast as possible, and bade him put it on with all speed. Samba obeyed, not daring to ask any questions ; and when he had finished the princess told him to follow her, and led him on to the flat roof of the house, below which a crowd had gathered, cheering lustily.

'Samba, the king's son-in-law ! Samba, the bravest

of the brave! Where is he? Let him show himself!' And when Samba did show himself the shouts and applause became louder than ever. 'See how modest he is! He leaves the glory to others!' cried they. And Samba only smiled and waved his hand, and said nothing.

Out of all the mass of people assembled there to do honour to Samba, one alone there was who did not shout and praise with the rest. This was the princess's youngest brother, whose sharp eyes had noted certain things during the fight which recalled his sister much more than they did her husband. Under promise of secrecy, he told his suspicions to the other princes, but only got laughed at, and was bidden to carry his dreams elsewhere.

'Well, well,' answered the boy, 'we shall see who is right; but the next time we give battle to the Moors I will take care to place a private mark on our commander.'

In spite of their defeat, not many days after the Moors sent a fresh body of troops to steal some cattle, and again Samba's wife dressed herself in her husband's armour, and rode out at the head of the avenging column. This time the combat was fiercer than before, and in the thick of it her youngest brother drew near, and gave his sister a slight wound on the leg. At the moment she paid no heed to the pain, which, indeed, she scarcely felt; but when the enemy had been put to flight and the little band returned to the palace, faintness suddenly overtook her, and she could hardly stagger up the staircase to her own apartments.

'I am wounded,' she cried, sinking down on the mats where he had been lying, 'but do not be anxious; it is really nothing. You have only got to wound yourself slightly in the same spot and no one will guess that it was I and not you who were fighting.'

'What!' cried Samba, his eyes nearly starting from

his head in surprise and terror. ‘Can you possibly imagine that I should agree to anything so useless and painful? Why, I might as well have gone to fight myself!’

‘Ah, I ought to have known better, indeed,’ answered the princess, in a voice that seemed to come from a long way off; but, quick as thought, the moment Samba turned his back she pierced one of his bare legs with a spear.

He gave a loud scream and staggered backwards, from astonishment, much more than from pain. But before he could speak his wife had left the room and had gone to seek the medicine man of the palace.

‘My husband has been wounded,’ said she, when she had found him, ‘come and tend him with speed, for he is faint from loss of blood.’ And she took care that more than one person heard her words, so that all that day the people pressed up to the gate of the palace, asking for news of their brave champion.

‘You see,’ observed the king’s eldest sons, who had visited the room where Samba lay groaning, ‘you see, O, wise young brother, that we were right and you were wrong about Samba, and that he really *did* go into the battle.’ But the boy answered nothing, and only shook his head doubtfully.

It was only two days later that the Moors appeared for the third time, and though the herds had been tethered in a new and safer place, they were promptly carried off as before. ‘For,’ said the Moors to each other, ‘the tribe will never think of our coming back so soon when they have beaten us so badly.’

When the drum sounded to assemble all the fighting men, the princess rose and sought her husband.

‘Samba,’ cried she, ‘my wound is worse than I thought. I can scarcely walk, and could not mount my horse without help. For to-day, then, I cannot do your work, so you must go instead of me.’

‘What nonsense,’ exclaimed Samba, ‘I never heard of such a thing. Why, I might be wounded, or even killed! You have three brothers. The king can choose one of them.’

‘They are all too young,’ replied his wife; ‘the men would not obey them. But if, indeed, you will not go, at least you can help me to harness my horse.’ And to this Samba, who was always ready to do anything he was asked when there was no danger about it, agreed readily.

So the horse was quickly harnessed, and when it was done the princess said:

Now ride the horse to the place of meeting outside the gates, and I will join you by a shorter way, and will change places with you.’ Samba, who loved riding in times of peace, mounted as she had told him, and when he was safe in the saddle, his wife dealt the horse a sharp cut with her whip, and he dashed off through the town and through the ranks of the warriors who were waiting for him. Instantly the whole place was in motion. Samba tried to check his steed, but he might as well have sought to stop the wind, and it seemed no more than a few minutes before they were grappling hand to hand with the Moors.

Then a miracle happened. Samba the coward, the skulker, the terrified, no sooner found himself pressed hard, unable to escape, than something sprang into life within him, and he fought with all his might. And when a man of his size and strength begins to fight he generally fights well.

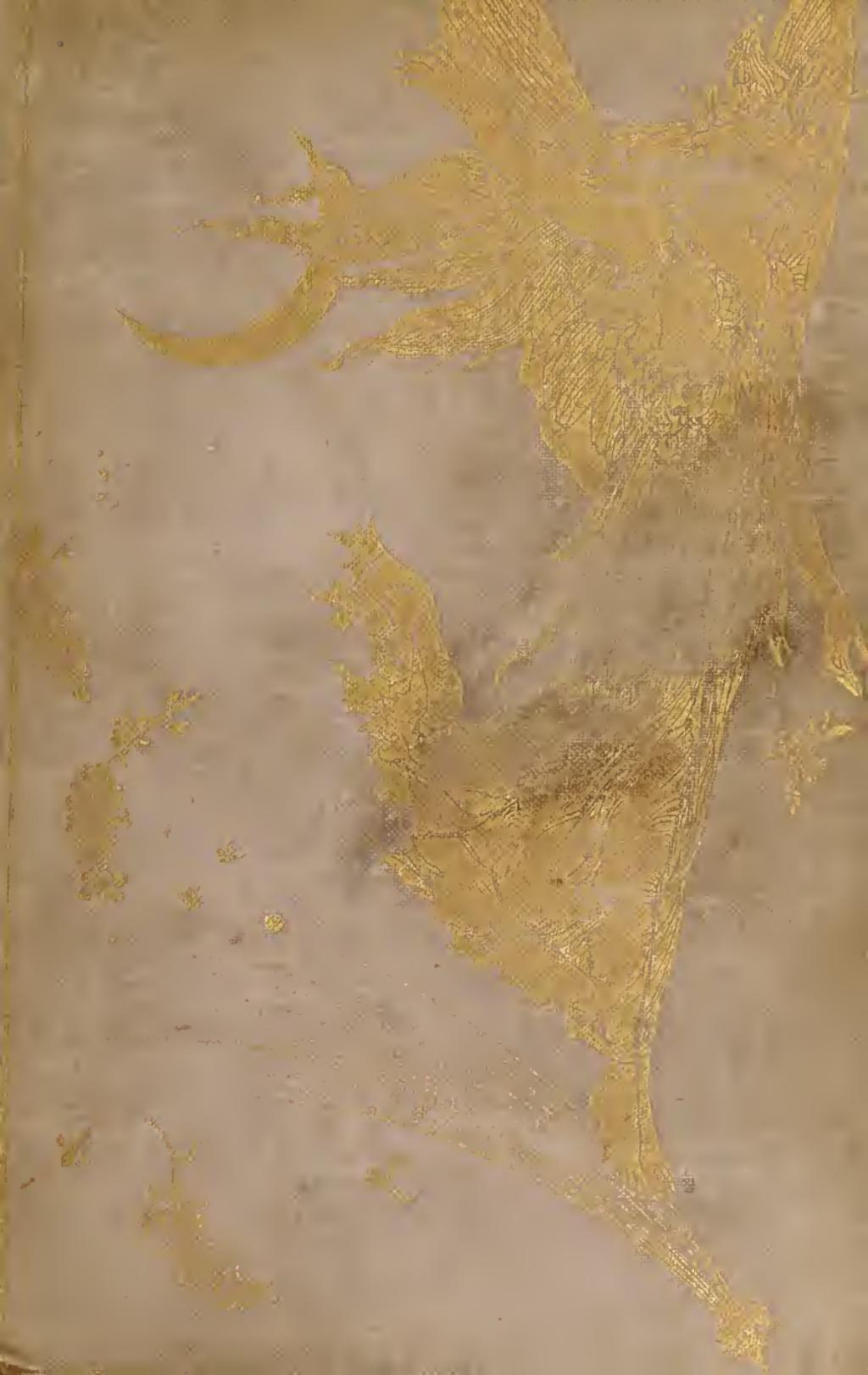
That day the victory was really owing to Samba, and the shouts of the people were louder than ever. When he returned, bearing with him the sword of the Moorish chief, the old king pressed him in his arms and said:

‘Oh, my son, how can I ever show you how grateful I am for this splendid service.’

But Samba, who was good and loyal when fear did not possess him, answered straightly :

‘My father, it is to your daughter and not to me to whom thanks are due, for it is she who has turned the coward that I was into a brave man.’

[*Contes Soudainais. Par C. Monteil.*]



THE
LILAC FAIRY BOOK

EDITED BY
ANDREW LANG



WITH 6 COLOURED PLATES AND
NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. J. FORD

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THE HEART OF A MONKEY

A LONG time ago a little town made up of a collection of low huts stood in a tiny green valley at the foot of a cliff. Of course the people had taken great care to build their houses out of reach of the highest tide which might be driven on shore by a west wind, but on the very edge of the town there had sprung up a tree so large that half its boughs hung over the huts and the other half over the deep sea right under the cliff, where sharks loved to come and splash in the clear water. The branches of the tree itself were laden with fruit, and every day at sunrise a big grey monkey might have been seen sitting in the topmost branches having his breakfast, and chattering to himself with delight.

After he had eaten all the fruit on the town side of the tree the monkey swung himself along the branches to the part which hung over the water. While he was looking out for a nice shady place where he might perch comfortably he noticed a shark watching him from below with greedy eyes.

‘Can I do anything for you, my friend?’ asked the monkey politely.

‘Oh! if you only *would* throw me down some of those delicious things, I should be so grateful,’ answered the shark. ‘After you have lived on fish for fifty years you begin to feel you would like a change. And I am so very, very tired of the taste of salt.’

'Well, I don't like salt myself,' said the monkey; 'so if you will open your mouth I will throw this beautiful juicy kuyu into it,' and, as he spoke, he pulled one off the branch just over his head. But it was not so easy to hit the shark's mouth as he supposed, even when the creature had turned on his back, and the first kuyu only struck one of his teeth and rolled into the water.



The Monkey feeds the Shark

However, the second time the monkey had better luck, and the fruit fell right in.

'Ah, how good!' cried the shark. 'Send me another, please,' and the monkey grew tired of picking the kuyu long before the shark was tired of eating them.

'It is getting late, and I must be going home to my

children,' he said at length, 'but if you are here at the same time to-morrow I will give you another treat.'

'Thank you, thank you,' said the shark, showing all his great ugly teeth as he grinned with delight; 'you can't guess how happy you have made me,' and he swam away into the shadow, hoping to sleep away the time till the money came again.

For weeks the monkey and the shark breakfasted together, and it was a wonder that the tree had any fruit left for them. They became fast friends, and told each other about their homes and their children, and how to teach them all they ought to know. By and bye the monkey became rather discontented with his green house in a grove of palms beyond the town, and longed to see the strange things under the sea which he had heard of from the shark. The shark perceived this very clearly, and described greater marvels, and the monkey as he listened grew more and more gloomy.

Matters were in this state when one day the shark said: 'I really hardly know how to thank you for all your kindness to me during these weeks. Here I have nothing of my own to offer you, but if you would only consent to come home with me, how gladly would I give you anything that might happen to take your fancy.'

'I should like nothing better,' cried the monkey, his teeth chattering, as they always did when he was pleased. 'But how could I get there? Not by water. Ugh! It makes me ill to think of it!'

'Oh! don't let that trouble you,' replied the shark, 'you have only to sit on my back and I will undertake that not a drop of water shall touch you.'

So it was arranged, and directly after breakfast next morning the shark swam close up under the tree and the monkey dropped neatly on his back, without

even a splash. After a few minutes — for at first he felt a little frightened at his strange position — the monkey began to enjoy himself vastly, and asked the shark a thousand questions about the fish and the sea-weeds and the oddly-shaped things that floated past them, and as the shark always gave him some sort of answer, the monkey never guessed that many of the objects they saw were as new to his guide as to himself.

The sun had risen and set six times when the shark suddenly said, 'My friend, we have now performed half our journey, and it is time that I should tell you something.'

'What is it?' asked the monkey. 'Nothing unpleasant, I hope, for you sound rather grave?'

'Oh, no! Nothing at all. It is only that shortly before we left I heard that the sultan of my country is very ill, and that the only thing to cure him is a monkey's heart.'

'Poor man, I am very sorry for him,' replied the monkey; 'but you were unwise not to tell me till we had started.'

'What do you mean?' asked the shark; but the monkey, who now understood the whole plot, did not answer at once, for he was considering what he should say.

'Why are you so silent?' inquired the shark again.

'I was thinking what a pity it was you did not tell me while I was still on land, and then I would have brought my heart with me.'

'Your heart! Why isn't your heart here?' said the shark, with a puzzled expression.

'Oh, no! Of course not. Is it possible you don't know that when we leave home we always hang up our hearts on trees, to prevent their being troublesome? However, perhaps you won't believe that, and will just think I have invented it because I am afraid, so let us

go on to your country as fast as we can, and when we arrive you can look for my heart, and if you find it you can kill me.'

The monkey spoke in such a calm, indifferent way that the shark was quite deceived, and began to wish he had not been in such a hurry.



The Monkey has a ride

'But there is no use going on if your heart is not with you,' he said at last. 'We had better turn back to the town, and then you can fetch it.'

Of course, this was just what the monkey wanted, but he was careful not to seem too pleased.

'Well, I don't know,' he remarked carelessly, 'it is such a long way; but you may be right.'

'I am sure I am,' answered the shark, 'and I will

swim as quickly as I can,' and so he did, and in three days they caught sight of the kuyu tree hanging over the water.

With a sigh of relief the monkey caught hold of the nearest branch and swung himself up.

'Wait for me here,' he called out to the shark. 'I am so hungry I must have a little breakfast, and then I will go and look for my heart,' and he went further and further into the branches so that the shark could not see him. Then he curled himself up and went to sleep.

'Are you there?' cried the shark, who was soon tired of swimming about under the cliff, and was in haste to be gone.

The monkey awoke with a start, but did not answer.

'Are you *there*?' called the shark again, louder than before, and in a very cross voice.

'Oh, yes. I am here,' replied the monkey; 'but I wish you had not wakened me up. I was having such a nice nap.'

'Have you got it?' asked the shark. 'It is time we were going.'

'Going *where*?' inquired the monkey.

'Why, to my country, of course, with your heart. You *can't* have forgotten!'

'My dear friend,' answered the monkey, with a chuckle, 'I think you must be going a little mad. Do you take me for a washerman's donkey?'

'Don't talk nonsense,' exclaimed the shark, who did not like being laughed at. 'What do you mean about a washerman's donkey? And I wish you would be quick, or we may be too late to save the sultan.'

'Did you *really* never hear of the washerman's donkey?' asked the monkey, who was enjoying himself immensely. 'Why, he is the beast who has no heart. And as I am not feeling very well, and am afraid to start while the sun is so high lest I should get a sunstroke,

if you like, I will come a little nearer and tell you his story.'

'Very well,' said the shark sulkily, 'if you won't come, I suppose I may as well listen to that as do nothing.'

So the monkey began.

'A washerman once lived in the great forest on the other side of the town, and he had a donkey to keep him company and to carry him wherever he wanted to go. For a time they got on very well, but by and bye the donkey grew lazy and ungrateful for her master's kindness, and ran away several miles into the heart of the forest, where she did nothing but eat and eat and eat, till she grew so fat she could hardly move.

'One day as she was tasting quite a new kind of grass and wondering if it was as good as what she had had for dinner the day before, a hare happened to pass by.

"Well, that *is* a fat creature," thought she, and turned out of her path to tell the news to a lion who was a friend of hers. Now the lion had been very ill, and was not strong enough to go hunting for himself, and when the hare came and told him that a very fat donkey was to be found only a few hundred yards off, tears of disappointment and weakness filled his eyes.

"What is the good of telling me that?" he asked, in a weepy voice; "you know I cannot even walk as far as that palm."

"Never mind," answered the hare briskly. "If you can't go to your dinner your dinner shall come to you," and nodding a farewell to the lion she went back to the donkey.

"Good morning," said she, bowing politely to the donkey, who lifted her head in surprise. "Excuse my interrupting you, but I have come on very important business."

"Indeed," answered the donkey, "it is most kind

of you to take the trouble. May I inquire what the business is?"

"Certainly," replied the hare. "It is my friend the lion who has heard so much of your charms and good qualities that he has sent me to beg that you will give



him your paw in marriage. He regrets deeply that he is unable to make the request in person, but he has been ill and is too weak to move."

"Poor fellow! How sad!" said the donkey. "But you must tell him that I feel honoured by his proposal, and will gladly consent to be Queen of the Beasts."

“Will you not come and tell him so yourself?” asked the hare.

‘Side by side they went down the road which led to the lion’s house. It took a long while, for the donkey was so fat with eating she could only walk very slowly, and the hare, who could have run the distance in about five minutes, was obliged to creep along till she almost dropped with fatigue at not being able to go at her own pace. When at last they arrived the lion was sitting up at the entrance, looking very pale and thin. The donkey suddenly grew shy and hung her head, but the lion put on his best manners and invited both his visitors to come in and make themselves comfortable.

‘Very soon the hare got up and said, “Well, as I have another engagement I will leave you to make acquaintance with your future husband,” and winking at the lion she bounded away.

‘The donkey expected that as soon as they were left alone the lion would begin to speak of their marriage, and where they should live, but as he said nothing she looked up. To her surprise and terror she saw him crouching in the corner, his eyes glaring with a red light, and with a loud roar he sprang towards her. But in that moment the donkey had had time to prepare herself, and jumping on one side dealt the lion such a hard kick that he shrieked with the pain. Again and again he struck at her with his claws, but the donkey could bite too, as well as the lion, who was very weak after his illness, and at last a well-planted kick knocked him right over, and he rolled on the floor, groaning with pain. The donkey did not wait for him to get up, but ran away as fast as she could and was lost in the forest.

‘Now the hare, who knew quite well what would happen, had not gone to do her business, but hid herself in some bushes behind the cave, where she could hear quite clearly the sounds of the battle. When all was

quiet again she crept gently out, and stole round the corner.

“Well, lion, have you killed her?” asked she, running swiftly up the path.

“Killed her, indeed!” answered the lion sulkily, “it is she who has nearly killed me. I never knew a donkey could kick like that, though I took care she should carry away the marks of my claws.”

“Dear me! Fancy such a great fat creature being able to fight,” cried the hare. “But don’t vex yourself. Just lie still, and your wounds will soon heal,” and she bade her friend good bye, and returned to her family.

“Two or three weeks passed, and only bare places on the donkey’s back showed where the lion’s claws had been, while, on his side, the lion had recovered from his illness and was now as strong as ever. He was beginning to think that it was almost time for him to begin hunting again, when one morning a rustle was heard in the creepers outside, and the hare’s head peeped through.

“Ah! there is no need to ask how you are,” she said. “Still you mustn’t overtire yourself, you know. Shall I go and bring you your dinner?”

“If you will bring me that donkey I will tear it in two,” cried the lion savagely, and the hare laughed and nodded and went on her errand.

This time the donkey was much further than before, and it took longer to find her. At last the hare caught sight of four hoofs in the air, and ran towards them. The donkey was lying on a soft cool bed of moss near a stream, rolling herself backwards and forwards from pleasure.

“Good morning,” said the hare politely, and the donkey got slowly on to her legs, and looked to see who her visitor could be.

“Oh, it is *you*, is it?” she exclaimed. “Come in and have a chat. What news have you got?”

“‘I mustn’t stay,’” answered the hare; “but I promised the lion to beg you to pay him a visit, as he is not well enough to call on you.”

“‘Well, I don’t know,’” replied the donkey gloomily, “the last time we went he scratched me very badly, and really I was quite afraid.”

“‘He was only trying to kiss you,’” said the hare, “and you bit him, and of course that made him cross.”

“‘If I were sure of *that*,’” hesitated the donkey.

“‘Oh, you may be quite sure,’” laughed the hare. “I have a large acquaintance among lions. But let us be quick,” and rather unwillingly the donkey set out.

‘The lion saw them coming and hid himself behind a large tree. As the donkey went past, followed by the hare, he sprang out, and with one blow of his paw stretched the poor foolish creature dead before him.

“‘Take this meat and skin it and roast it,’” he said to the hare; “but my appetite is not so good as it was, and the only part I want for myself is the heart. The rest you can either eat for yourself or give away to your friends.”

“‘Thank you,’” replied the hare, balancing the donkey on her back as well as she was able, and though the legs trailed along the ground she managed to drag it to an open space some distance off, where she made a fire and roasted it. As soon as it was cooked the hare took out the heart and had just finished eating it when the lion, who was tired of waiting, came up.

“‘I am hungry,’” said he. “‘Bring me the creature’s heart; it is just what I want for supper.’”

“‘But there is no heart,’” answered the hare, looking up at the lion with a puzzled face.

“‘What nonsense!’” said the lion. “‘As if every beast had not got a heart. What do you mean?’”

“‘This is a washerman’s donkey,’” replied the hare gravely.

“‘Well, and suppose it is?’”

“Oh, fie!” exclaimed the hare. “You a lion and a grown-up person, and ask questions like that. If the donkey had had a heart would she be here now? The first time she came she knew you were trying to kill her, and ran away. Yet she came back a second time. Well, if she had had a heart would she have come back a second time? Now *would* she?”

‘And the lion answered slowly, “No, she would not.”

‘So you think I am a washerman’s donkey?’ said the monkey to the shark, when the story was ended. ‘You are wrong; I am not. And as the sun is getting low in the sky, it is time for you to begin your homeward journey. You will have a nice cool voyage, and I hope you will find the sultan better. Farewell!’ And the monkey disappeared among the green branches, and was gone.

From ‘Swahili Tales,’ by Edward Steere, LL.D.

THE ONE-HANDED GIRL

AN old couple once lived in a hut under a grove of palm trees, and they had one son and one daughter. They were all very happy together for many years, and then the father became very ill, and felt he was going to die. He called his children to the place where he lay on the floor — for no one had any beds in that country — and said to his son, 'I have no herds of cattle to leave you — only the few things there are in the house — for I am a poor man, as you know. But choose: will you have my blessing or my property ?'

'Your property, certainly,' answered the son, and his father nodded.

'And you?' asked the old man of the girl, who stood by her brother.

'I will have blessing,' she answered, and her father gave her much blessing.

That night he died, and his wife and son and daughter mourned for him seven days, and gave him a burial according to the custom of his people. But hardly was the time of mourning over, than the mother was attacked by a disease which was common in that country.

'I am going away from you,' she said to her children, in a faint voice; 'but first, my son, choose which you will have: blessing or property.'

'Property, certainly,' answered the son.

'And you, my daughter?'

‘I will have blessing,’ said the girl; and her mother gave her much blessing, and that night she died.

When the days of mourning were ended, the brother bade his sister put outside the hut all that belonged to his father and his mother. So the girl put them out, and he took them away, save only a small pot and a vessel in which she could clean her corn. But she had no corn to clean.

She sat at home, sad and hungry, when a neighbour knocked at the door.

‘My pot has cracked in the fire, lend me yours to cook my supper in, and I will give you a handful of corn in return.’

And the girl was glad, and that night she was able to have supper herself, and next day another woman borrowed her pot, and then another and another, for never were known so many accidents as befell the village pots at that time. She soon grew quite fat with all the corn she earned with the help of her pot, and then one evening she picked up a pumpkin seed in a corner, and planted it near her well, and it sprang up, and gave her many pumpkins.

At last it happened that a youth from her village passed through the place where the girl’s brother was, and the two met and talked.

‘What news is there of my sister?’ asked the young man, with whom things had gone badly, for he was idle.

‘She is fat and well-liking,’ replied the youth, ‘for the women borrow her mortar to clean their corn, and borrow her pot to cook it in, and for all this they give her more food than she can eat.’ And he went his way.

Now the brother was filled with envy at the words of the man, and he set out at once, and before dawn he had reached the hut, and saw the pot and the mortar were standing outside. He slung them over his shoulders and departed, pleased with his own cleverness; but

when his sister awoke and sought for the pot to cook her corn for breakfast, she could find it nowhere. At length she said to herself:

‘Well, some thief must have stolen them while I slept. I will go and see if any of my pumpkins are ripe.’ And indeed they were, and so many that the tree was almost broken by the weight of them. So she ate what she wanted and took the others to the village, and gave them in exchange for corn, and the women said that no pumpkins were as sweet as these, and that she was to bring every day all that she had. In this way she earned more than she needed for herself, and soon was able to get another mortar and cooking pot in exchange for her corn. Then she thought she was quite rich.

Unluckily someone else thought so too, and this was her brother’s wife, who had heard all about the pumpkin tree, and sent her slave with a handful of grain to buy her a pumpkin. At first the girl told him that so few were left that she could not spare any; but when she found that he belonged to her brother, she changed her mind, and went out to the tree and gathered the largest and the ripest that was there.

‘Take this one,’ she said to the slave, ‘and carry it back to your mistress, but tell her to keep the corn, as the pumpkin is a gift.’

The brother’s wife was overjoyed at the sight of the fruit, and when she tasted it, she declared it was the nicest she had ever eaten. Indeed, all night she thought of nothing else, and early in the morning she called another slave (for she was a rich woman) and bade him go and ask for another pumpkin. But the girl, who had just been out to look at her tree, told him that they were all eaten, so he went back empty-handed to his mistress.

In the evening her husband returned from hunting a long way off, and found his wife in tears.

‘What is the matter?’ asked he.

‘I sent a slave with some grain to your sister to buy some pumpkins, but she would not sell me any, and told me there were none, though I know she lets other people buy them.’

‘Well, never mind now — go to sleep,’ said he, ‘and to-morrow I will go and pull up the pumpkin tree, and that will punish her for treating you so badly.’

So before sunrise he got up and set out for his sister’s house, and found her cleaning some corn.

‘Why did you refuse to sell my wife a pumpkin yesterday when she wanted one?’ he asked.

‘The old ones are finished, and the new ones are not yet come,’ answered the girl. ‘When her slave arrived two days ago, there were only four left; but I gave him one, and would take no corn for it.’

‘I do not believe you: you have sold them all to other people. I shall go and cut down the pumpkin,’ cried her brother in a rage.

‘If you cut down the pumpkin you shall cut off my hand with it,’ exclaimed the girl, running up to her tree and catching hold of it. But her brother followed, and with one blow cut off the pumpkin and her hand too.

Then he went into the house and took away everything he could find, and sold the house to a friend of his who had long wished to have it, and his sister had no home to go to.

Meanwhile she had bathed her arm carefully, and bound on it some healing leaves that grew near by, and wrapped a cloth round the leaves, and went to hide in the forest, that her brother might not find her again.

For seven days she wandered about, eating only the fruit that hung from the trees above her, and every night she climbed up and tucked herself safely among the creepers which bound together the big branches, so that neither lions nor tigers nor panthers might get at her.



HOW THE GIRL LOST HER HAND'

H.J. Ford

When she woke up on the seventh morning she saw from her perch smoke coming up from a little town on the edge of the forest. The sight of the huts made her feel more lonely and helpless than before. She longed desperately for a draught of milk from a gourd, for there were no streams in that part, and she was very thirsty, but how was she to earn anything with only one hand? And at this thought her courage failed, and she began to cry bitterly.

It happened that the king's son had come out from the town very early to shoot birds, and when the sun grew hot he felt tired.

'I will lie here and rest under this tree,' he said to his attendants. 'You can go and shoot instead, and I will just have this slave to stay with me!' Away they went, and the young man fell asleep, and slept long. Suddenly he was awakened by something wet and salt falling on his face.

'What is that? Is it raining?' he said to his slave. 'Go and look.'

'No, master, it is not raining,' answered the slave.

'Then climb up the tree and see what it is,' and the slave climbed up, and came back and told his master that a beautiful girl was sitting up there, and that it must have been her tears which had fallen on the face of the king's son.

'Why was she crying?' inquired the prince.

'I cannot tell—I did not dare to ask her; but perhaps she would tell you.' And the master, greatly wondering, climbed up the tree.

'What is the matter with you?' said he gently, and, as she only sobbed louder, he continued:

'Are you a woman, or a spirit of the woods?'

'I am a woman,' she answered slowly, wiping her eyes with a leaf of the creeper that hung about her.

'Then why do you cry?' he persisted.

'I have many things to cry for,' she replied, 'more than you could ever guess.'

'Come home with me,' said the prince; 'it is not very far. Come home to my father and mother. I am a king's son.'

'Then why are you here?' she said, opening her eyes and staring at him.

'Once every month I and my friends shoot birds in the forest,' he answered, 'but I was tired and bade them leave me to rest. And you — what are you doing up in this tree?'

At that she began to cry again, and told the king's son all that had befallen her since the death of her mother.

'I cannot come down with you, for I do not like anyone to see me,' she ended with a sob.

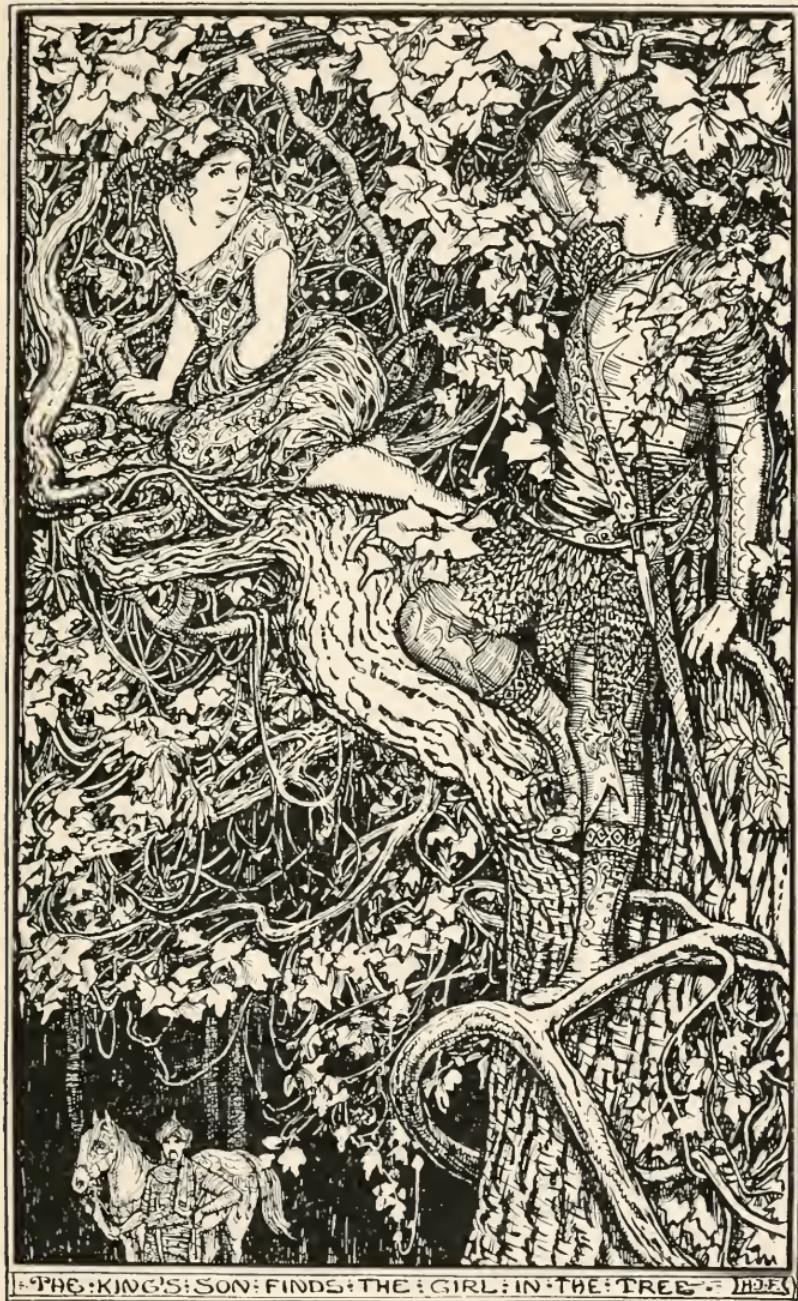
'Oh! I will manage all that,' said the king's son, and swinging himself to a lower branch, he bade his slave go quickly into the town, and bring back with him four strong men and a curtained litter. When the man was gone, the girl climbed down, and hid herself on the ground in some bushes. Very soon the slave returned with the litter, which was placed on the ground close to the bushes where the girl lay.

'Now go, all of you, and call my attendants, for I do not wish to stay here any longer,' he said to the men, and as soon as they were out of sight he bade the girl get into the litter, and fasten the curtains tightly. Then he got in on the other side, and waited till his attendants came up.

'What is the matter, O son of a king?' asked they, breathless with running.

'I think I am ill; I am cold,' he said, and signing to the bearers, he drew the curtains, and was carried through the forest right inside his own house.

'Tell my father and mother that I have a fever, and want some gruel,' said he, 'and bid them send it quickly.'



THE KING'S SON FINDS THE GIRL IN THE TREE

So the slave hastened to the king's palace and gave his message, which troubled both the king and the queen greatly. A pot of hot gruel was instantly prepared, and carried over to the sick man, and as soon as the council which was sitting was over, the king and his ministers went to pay him a visit, bearing a message from the queen that she would follow a little later.

Now the prince had pretended to be ill in order to soften his parents' hearts, and the next day he declared he felt better, and, getting into his litter, was carried to the palace in state, drums being beaten all along the road.

He dismounted at the foot of the steps and walked up, a great parasol being held over his head by a slave. Then he entered the cool, dark room where his father and mother were sitting, and said to them:

'I saw a girl yesterday in the forest whom I wish to marry, and, unknown to my attendants, I brought her back to my house in a litter. Give me your consent, I beg, for no other woman pleases me as well, even though she has but one hand!'

Of course the king and queen would have preferred a daughter-in-law with two hands, and one who could have brought riches with her, but they could not bear to say 'No' to their son, so they told him it should be as he chose, and that the wedding feast should be prepared immediately.

The girl could scarcely believe her good fortune, and, in gratitude for all the kindness shown her, was so useful and pleasant to her husband's parents that they soon loved her.

By and bye a baby was born to her, and soon after that the prince was sent on a journey by his father to visit some of the distant towns of the kingdom, and to set right things that had gone wrong.

No sooner had he started than the girl's brother, who

had wasted all the riches his wife had brought him in recklessness and folly, and was now very poor, chanced to come into the town, and as he passed he heard a man say, 'Do you know that the king's son has married a woman who has lost one of her hands?' On hearing these words the brother stopped and asked, 'Where did he find such a woman?'

'In the forest,' answered the man, and the cruel brother guessed at once it must be his sister.

A great rage took possession of his soul as he thought of the girl whom he had tried to ruin being after all so much better off than himself, and he vowed that he would work her ill. Therefore that very afternoon he made his way to the palace and asked to see the king.

When he was admitted to his presence, he knelt down and touched the ground with his forehead, and the king bade him stand up and tell wherefore he had come.

'By the kindness of your heart have you been deceived, O king,' said he. 'Your son has married a girl who has lost a hand. Do you know why she has lost it? She was a witch, and has wedded three husbands, and each husband she has put to death with her arts. Then the people of the town cut off her hand, and turned her into the forest. And what I say is true, for her town is my town also.'

The king listened, and his face grew dark. Unluckily he had a hasty temper, and did not stop to reason, and, instead of sending to the town, and discovering people who knew his daughter-in-law and could have told him how hard she had worked and how poor she had been, he believed all the brother's lying words, and made the queen believe them too. Together they took counsel what they should do, and in the end they decided that they also would put her out of the town. But this did not content the brother.

'Kill her,' he said. 'It is no more than she deserves

for daring to marry the king's son. Then she can do no more hurt to anyone.'

'We cannot kill her,' answered they; 'if we did, our son would assuredly kill us. Let us do as the others did,



and put her out of the town.' And with this the envious brother was forced to be content.

The poor girl loved her husband very much, but just then the baby was more to her than all else in the world,

and as long as she had him with her, she did not very much mind anything. So, taking her son on her arm, and hanging a little earthen pot for cooking round her neck, she left her house with its great peacock fans and slaves and seats of ivory, and plunged into the forest.

For a while she walked, not knowing whither she went, then by and bye she grew tired, and sat under a tree to rest and to hush her baby to sleep. Suddenly she raised her eyes, and saw a snake wriggling from under the bushes towards her.

‘I am a dead woman,’ she said to herself, and stayed quite still, for indeed she was too frightened to move. In another minute the snake had reached her side, and to her surprise he spoke.

‘Open your earthen pot, and let me go in. Save me from sun, and I will save you from rain,’ and she opened the pot, and when the snake had slipped in, she put on the cover. Soon she beheld another snake coming after the other one, and when it had reached her it stopped and said, ‘Did you see a small grey snake pass this way just now?’

‘Yes,’ she answered, ‘it was going very quickly.’

‘Ah, I must hurry and catch it up,’ replied the second snake, and it hastened on.

When it was out of sight, a voice from the pot said:

‘Uncover me,’ and she lifted the lid, and the little grey snake slid rapidly to the ground.

‘I am safe now,’ he said. ‘But tell me, where are you going?’

‘I cannot tell you, for I do not know,’ she answered. ‘I am just wandering in the wood.’

‘Follow me, and let us go home together,’ said the snake, and the girl followed him through the forest and along the green paths, till they came to a great lake, where they stopped to rest.

‘The sun is hot,’ said the snake, ‘and you have



MY BABY, MY BABY!"

H. F. G. C.

walked far. Take your baby and bathe in that cool place where the boughs of the tree stretch far over the water.'

'Yes, I will,' answered she, and they went in. The baby splashed and crowed with delight, and then he gave a spring and fell right in, down, down, down, and his mother could not find him, though she searched all among the reeds.

Full of terror, she made her way back to the bank, and called to the snake, 'My baby is gone! — he is drowned, and never shall I see him again.'

'Go in once more,' said the snake, 'and feel everywhere, even among the trees that have their roots in the water, lest perhaps he may be held fast there.'

Swiftly she went back and felt everywhere with her whole hand, even putting her fingers into the tiniest crannies, where a crab could hardly have taken shelter.

'No, he is not here,' she cried. 'How am I to live without him?' But the snake took no notice, and only answered, 'Put in your other arm too.'

'What is the use of that?' she asked, 'when it has no hand to feel with?' but all the same she did as she was bid, and in an instant the wounded arm touched something round and soft, lying between two stones in a clump of reeds.

'My baby, my baby!' she shouted, and lifted him up, merry and laughing, and not a bit hurt or frightened.

'Have you found him this time?' asked the snake.

'Yes, oh, yes!' she answered, 'and, why — why — I have got my hand back again!' and from sheer joy she burst into tears.

The snake let her weep for a little while, and then he said —

'Now we will journey on to my family, and we will all repay you for the kindness you showed to me.'

'You have done more than enough in giving me

back my hand,' replied the girl; but the snake only smiled.

'Be quick, lest the sun should set,' he answered, and began to wriggle along so fast that the girl could hardly follow him.

By and bye they arrived at the house in a tree where the snake lived, when he was not travelling with his father and mother. And he told them all his adventures, and how he had escaped from his enemy. The father and mother snake could not do enough to show their gratitude. They made their guest lie down on a hammock woven of the strong creepers which hung from bough to bough, till she was quite rested after her wanderings, while they watched the baby and gave him milk to drink from the coconuts which they persuaded their friends the monkeys to crack for them. They even managed to carry small fruit tied up in their tails for the baby's mother, who felt at last that she was safe and at peace. Not that she forgot her husband, for she often thought of him and longed to show him her son, and in the night she would sometimes lie awake and wonder where he was.

In this manner many weeks passed by.

And what was the prince doing?

Well, he had fallen very ill when he was on the furthest border of the kingdom, and he was nursed by some kind people who did not know who he was, so that the king and queen heard nothing about him. When he was better he made his way slowly home again, and into his father's palace, where he found a strange man standing behind the throne with the peacock's feathers. This was his wife's brother, whom the king had taken into high favour, though, of course, the prince was quite ignorant of what had happened.

For a moment the king and queen stared at their son, as if he had been unknown to them; he had grown so thin

and weak during his illness that his shoulders were bowed like those of an old man.

‘Have you forgotten me so soon?’ he asked.

At the sound of his voice they gave a cry and ran towards him, and poured out questions as to what had happened, and why he looked like that. But the prince did not answer any of them.

‘How is my wife?’ he said. There was a pause.

Then the queen replied:

‘She is dead.’

‘*Dead!*’ he repeated, stepping a little backwards.
‘And my child?’

‘He is dead too.’

The young man stood silent. Then he said, ‘Show me their graves.’

At these words the king, who had been feeling rather uncomfortable, took heart again, for had he not prepared two beautiful tombs for his son to see, so that he might never, never guess what had been done to his wife? All these months the king and queen had been telling each other how good and merciful they had been not to take her brother’s advice and to put her to death. But now, this somehow did not seem so certain.

Then the king led the way to the courtyard just behind the palace, and through the gate into a beautiful garden where stood two splendid tombs in a green space under the trees. The prince advanced alone, and, resting his head against the stone, he burst into tears. His father and mother stood silently behind with a curious pang in their souls which they did not quite understand. Could it be that they were ashamed of themselves?

But after a while the prince turned round, and walking past them into the palace he bade the slaves bring him mourning. For seven days no one saw him, but at the end of them he went out hunting, and helped his

father rule his people as before. Only no one dared to speak to him of his wife and son.

At last one morning, after the girl had been lying



awake all night thinking of her husband, she said to her friend the snake:

‘You have all shown me much kindness, but now I am well again, and want to go home and hear some news

of my husband, and if he still mourns for me!' Now the heart of the snake was sad at her words, but he only said:

'Yes, thus it must be; go and bid farewell to my father and mother, but if they offer you a present, see that you take nothing but my father's ring and my mother's casket.'

So she went to the parent snakes, who wept bitterly at the thought of losing her, and offered her gold and jewels as much as she could carry in remembrance of them. But the girl shook her head and pushed the shining heap away from her.

'I shall never forget you, never,' she said in a broken voice, 'but the only tokens I will accept from you are that little ring and this old casket.'

The two snakes looked at each other in dismay. The ring and the casket were the only things they did not want her to have. Then after a short pause they spoke.

'Why do you want the ring and casket so much? Who has told you of them?'

'Oh, nobody; it is just my fancy,' answered she. But the old snakes shook their heads and replied:

'Not so; it is our son who told you, and, as he said, so it must be. If you need food, or clothes, or a house, tell the ring and it will find them for you. And if you are unhappy or in danger, tell the casket and it will set things right.' Then they both gave her their blessing, and she picked up her baby and went her way.

She walked for a long time, till at length she came near the town where her husband and his father dwelt. Here she stopped under a grove of palm trees, and told the ring that she wanted a house.

'It is ready, mistress,' whispered a queer little voice which made her jump, and, looking behind her, she saw a lovely palace made of the finest woods, and a row of slaves with tall fans bowing before the door. Glad indeed was she to enter, for she was very tired, and, after eating a good supper of fruit and milk which she found

in one of the rooms, she flung herself down on a pile of cushions and went to sleep with her baby beside her.

Here she stayed quietly, and every day the baby grew taller and stronger, and very soon he could run about and even talk. Of course the neighbours had a great deal to say about the house which had been built so quickly—so very quickly—on the outskirts of the town, and invented all kinds of stories about the rich lady who lived in it. And by and bye, when the king returned with his son from the wars, some of these tales reached his ears.

‘It is really very odd about that house under the palms,’ he said to the queen; ‘I must find out something of the lady whom no one ever sees. I daresay it is not a lady at all, but a gang of conspirators who want to get possession of my throne. To-morrow I shall take my son and my chief ministers and insist on getting inside.’

Soon after sunrise next day the prince’s wife was standing on a little hill behind the house, when she saw a cloud of dust coming through the town. A moment afterwards she heard faintly the roll of the drums that announced the king’s presence, and saw a crowd of people approaching the grove of palms. Her heart beat fast. Could her husband be among them? In any case they must not discover her there; so just bidding the ring prepare some food for them, she ran inside, and bound a veil of golden gauze round her head and face. Then, taking the child’s hand, she went to the door and waited.

In a few minutes the whole procession came up, and she stepped forward and begged them to come in and rest.

‘Willingly,’ answered the king; ‘go first, and we will follow you.’

They followed her into a long dark room, in which

was a table covered with gold cups and baskets filled with dates and coconuts and all kinds of ripe yellow fruits, and the king and the prince sat upon cushions and were served by slaves, while the ministers, among whom she recognised her own brother, stood behind.

‘Ah, I owe all my misery to him,’ she said to herself. ‘From the first he has hated me,’ but outwardly she showed nothing. And when the king asked her what news there was in the town she only answered:

‘You have ridden far; eat first, and drink, for you must be hungry and thirsty, and then I will tell you my news.’

‘You speak sense,’ answered the king, and silence prevailed for some time longer. Then he said:

‘Now, lady, I have finished, and am refreshed, therefore tell me, I pray you, who you are, and whence you come? But, first, be seated.’

She bowed her head and sat down on a big scarlet cushion, drawing her little boy, who was asleep in a corner, on to her knee, and began to tell the story of her life. As her brother listened, he would fain have left the house and hidden himself in the forest, but it was his duty to wave the fan of peacock’s feathers over the king’s head to keep off the flies, and he knew he would be seized by the royal guards if he tried to desert his post. He must stay where he was, there was no help for it, and luckily for him the king was too much interested in the tale to notice that the fan had ceased moving, and that flies were dancing right on the top of his thick curly hair.

The story went on, but the story-teller never once looked at the prince, even through her veil, though he on his side never moved his eyes from her. When she reached the part where she had sat weeping in the tree, the king’s son could restrain himself no longer.

‘It is my wife,’ he cried, springing to where she sat with the sleeping child in her lap. ‘They have lied to me, and you are not dead after all, nor the boy either!

But what has happened? Why did they lie to me? and why did you leave my house where you were safe?' And he turned and looked fiercely at his father.

'Let me finish my tale first, and then you will know,' answered she, throwing back her veil, and she told how her brother had come to the palace and accused her of being a witch, and had tried to persuade the king to slay her. 'But he would not do that,' she continued softly, 'and after all, if I had stayed on in your house, I should never have met the snake, nor have got my hand back again. So let us forget all about it, and be happy once more, for see! our son is growing quite a big boy.'

'And what shall be done to your brother?' asked the king, who was glad to think that someone had acted in this matter worse than himself.

'Put him out of the town,' answered she.

From 'Swaheli Tales,' by E. Steere.